

UNCHR Item 7 “The Israel-Palestinian conflict and occupation” 13-14 June 2022, Geneva

Discussion of the first report delivered by the commission of inquiry (COI)

Chair of the COI Navi Pillay, was the first speaker.

As expected, “Israel occupation” was named to be the “root cause” of the conflict, with the Palestinians, the cause for all “their suffering and violations of their rights”. “Occupation” was also claimed to be the root cause of terrorist violence and the shooting of rockets by Hamas. These “activities” were mostly absent in the report that mentioned Hamas only three times vs. Israel, mentioned 157 times.

Ms. Pillay complained about the lack of cooperation by Israel, not giving the COI permission to enter the country, nor to enter the West bank and Gaza by crossing the borders to Israel. COI was of the opinion that the information obtained “per distance” was sufficient for their mandate.

She also blamed the USA for declining the COI and her work, a sign to her that the USA does not care enough about the violations of human rights.

Ms. Pillay further complained about the 25% slash of their budget by the USA that limited their working scope. The conclusion of the report was that “occupation **must** end immediately” and that peace and joy will then follow in the entire region.

Israel was asked to answer the accusations of the COI but since Israel boycotted this biased procedure, the delegation of Israel was absent from the meeting.

The **Palestinian** delegate hailed the COI’s work and condemned the USA and the “shameful attitudes” of Mr. Blinken, who believes that the “COI is shameful”. Because of her negative attitude, the USA should not be a member of the Council. **He called for the General Assembly of the UN to suspend the membership of the USA from the UNCHR!**

The USA submitted a statement signed by 22 countries and spoke on behalf of this group, and many other council members who expressed their fundamental concern about the “open ended” mandate given to the COI, the “never ending” yearly budget with no “sunset clause”, something never practiced before by the UNCHR. The Council members should have worked to encounter impunity on the basis of universally and equally applied standards and the unequal treatment of Israel must be stopped. The council is obliged to address human rights concerns in an even-handed manner.

Among the 22 democracies who signed the statement were Austria, Germany, Hungary and the United Kingdom. Belgium, France, Luxemburg and Switzerland did not sign. The rejection of the COI and its report by 22 democracies is considered a success for Israel and diminishes the value of its statements.

The **representative of the European Union** said that the EU did not support the establishment of this commission in 2021 and is concerned about the “cycles of violence”. The EU calls to respect the status quo on the Temple Mount, condemns the Hamas’s indiscriminate rocket fire into Israel and called Palestinian authorities to investigate alleged human rights violations. He concluded by firmly condemning settler activities.

Listing some of the other speakers:

Pakistan expressed very strong condemnations and spoke three times: on behalf of Islamic countries, on behalf of “a group of sixty countries” and finally on behalf of its own country.

Jordan spoke its support to the work of the COI on behalf of Arab countries.

Saudi Arabia thanked the commission, expressed support to the Palestinian People and called for a **two-state solution**.

The UAE respects any peaceful resolution which legitimately takes into account the interests of Palestinian people.

France (that did not sign the statement of the 22) pointed out that, the mandate of the commission is too broad and its objectives are not fully determined, expressed its concern about violence in Jerusalem and the shocking death of an Al Jazeera journalist, called for a stop to evictions and **condemned strongly the terrorist attacks against Israel**. France will **never say anything “against the security of Israel”**. The two-state solution is the only way to ensure peace and the Palestinian Authority was called to combat impunity in the Palestinian territory.

Luxemburg, an EU state that not only did not sign with the 22 (European) but stood out negatively by hailing the work of the COI that reflects the “cycle of violence and lack of implementation of most of the recommendations”. Luxemburg opposes the forced occupation by Israel and considers its “impunity” a major obstacle for achieving peace.

The Russian Federation, that was part of those who called for a COI in 2021, was “very concerned” about the information it presented and expressed her good will to find a compromise with regional players and “work for peace”.

46 States expressed their opinions. Their majority hailed the work of the commission and condemned Israel, some more and others less virulently. Unfortunately, due to the UN regional system, China, Cuba, Iran, Russia, supported by many other dictatorship regimes who violate human rights and always offend Israel, have a vast majority at the UNCHR.

Ten NGOs and other organizations took the floor thereafter. Some of them like Amnesty International and UN Watch exceeded even the most offending states. Amnesty International used very virulent wording, pointing out again its negative attitude towards Israel and calling it an apartheid state.

The Institute for NGO research, B’nai Brit, the Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust (Touro Law Center) and Ingenieurs du Monde: Col. Richard Kemp (on behalf of UN Watch), were the four speakers that opposed the bias against Israel.

The speaker of **Holocaust memorial**, who spoke by video from the USA, pointed out the bias against the Jewish people although the UNCHR was established following the Shoa. As a reaction to her speech, the chair called for the use of “correct and respectful wording towards the mandate and moderator”.

The Palestinian representative interrupted the statement of **Colonel Kemp** by calling to “a point of order” asking “for respect to the mandate of the council and stick to using a respectful language”.

Thereafter Col. Kemp was allowed to finish his statement that accused that the biased COI was supported by the Russian Federation that is a major violator of human rights.

It has to be mentioned that only these two NGOs were singled out for their “non respectful speech” while all other speakers, who sometimes were using very poignant wording, were allowed to finish without interruption.

Navi Pillay finally made her concluding remarks, thanking for the strong support from the majority of member states. She announced the continuation of the work of COI that will now review all past-resolutions passed by the United Nations.