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UN Gangs Up on Israel on Holocaust Commemoration Day

By Avi Benlolo

Last week I accused the United Nations of being 'insincere' in its commemoration of the Holocaust on January 27th, the day Auschwitz was liberated. While the UN is correct to finally acknowledge the Holocaust and create an educational outreach programme, waiting for 60 years after the greatest human massacre of all time to acknowledge such a horrific tragedy is incomprehensible.

I argued the UN is making matters worse by contradicting its own policy of genocide prevention and Holocaust denial by enabling – if not empowering – the likes of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad by permitting him to address the General Assembly.

The UN further foments antisemitism while building momentum for a second genocide against the Jews (code word: Israel) by encouraging its affiliated agencies like the Human Rights Commission and the International Criminal Court to turn the country into a pariah state.

On January 27th, however, the UN's Holocaust Outreach programme made a sincere effort to commemorate the Holocaust in a meaningful way. It held a series of events throughout the week including the opening of two exhibitions, an interreligious conference, a memorial ceremony and a special video with remarks by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. I was impressed and still hold on to the belief that the UN can be a worthwhile forum for peace and change.

But change is relative. The UN is a complex institution where hierocracy and double-speak is the norm. So it was that on the same day, while one group at the UN was focused on remembering the victims of the Holocaust and reminding the world that hate is dangerous, another group was yet again ganging up on the State of Israel.

The Security Council held a very special session on January 27th – not to commemorate the Holocaust or even mention the tragic event; instead, the Council met to discuss "the situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian Question".

What took place in the Council Chambers on that special day of commemoration and respect for the victims of the Holocaust is shameful. No less than a dozen Arab nations focused squarely on Israel regarding the impasse in Gaza. Not one acknowledged that Hamas lobbed more than 8,000 rockets on Israel prior to Operation Cast Lead and has recently renewed its launching of rockets from Gaza against Israel.

The UN designated one day a year to remember the victims of the Holocaust. It is on the right path to developing a meaningful educational programme to remember those who perished and to discourage others from following the path to genocide.

Couldn't the usual business of ganging up on Israel not wait until the following day?