

East of the Sun for the United Nations

by Michael Curtis

Why is the headquarters of the United Nations still in New York? If it is removed, we'll have Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island too. Once removed and situated elsewhere, Sudanese President Omar al Bashir, who canceled plans to attend in 2013, can attend meetings of the UN General Assembly. So far he has been denied a U.S. visa because he has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes he allegedly committed in the Darfur region of Sudan where 300,000 were killed and two million were displaced.

For the benefit of Bashir and the other numerous dictators, tyrants, and ruthless violators of human rights, it is incumbent on well meaning people to find a more suitable location for the UN, perhaps, Khartoum, Kabul, Mogadishu or Aleppo, where they could obtain visas and would feel more comfortable.

Given the past actions of the UNHRC can any rational person really be surprised that at the UNHRC meeting on March 24, 2016, Israel was proclaimed the worst violator of human rights in the world? Five resolutions condemned Israel, and only one each criticized Syria, North Korea, and Iran. It is hardly a surprise that a Palestinian engineer working for the UN Development Program in 2016 improperly transferred 300 tons of construction rubble to be used by the terrorist Qassam Brigades in Gaza for the anti-Israel tunnels they were building. It is no surprise that the World Vision Gaza Director diverted more than \$50 million to the terrorists of Hamas.

During its 70 years the UN, with its UNICEF program saving

children, its international development programs, and its Disengagement Observer Forces, has made some useful contributions. But its positive actions are completely overshadowed by the way in which its various organizations have been the instruments for political warfare and vicious attacks on democratic systems, above all on the State of Israel.

Sadly, the United Nations, whose Charter was signed on June 26, 1945, has lost its moral compass. The preamble of the Charter reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights. Article 1 states the purpose of the UN: to be a "center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these (previously mentioned peace and security) common ends." It is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members.

Equally all objective commentators have observed that the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Human Rights Council, UNESCO, the World Health Organization, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the UN Committee on the Status of Women, have all subverted the honorable principles of the founders of the world organization. They have all been forceful avenues not only for condemning and demonizing the State of Israel and "Zionism," but also for disseminating hatred of Jews, antisemitism and Holocaust denial.

Only a few examples are necessary to illustrate the disgraceful behavior of the UN institutions. The UN General Assembly (UNGA) has been guilty of an unprecedented tide of biased and prejudiced condemnations of Israel and its citizens. Between 1955 and 2013 there were 77 such resolutions. In 2015 the UNGA recorded 90 votes on countries: 18 were condemnations of Israel.

In the competition for the most ridiculous and absurd organization in the world the UN Human Right Council (UNHRC), would be a favorite. Of its 47 members, 17 are members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Council has

resolved almost more resolutions condemning Israel, 545 or 45 % of the total, than on all the rest of the world combined. The rule is that at every UNHRC session, the Israeli record of human rights must be discussed. In January 2013, UNHRC implicitly recommended a boycott of Israel by private companies. This was followed in March 25, 2016 by approval, 32-0-15, of a "blacklist," a data base of businesses "involved in activities in the Occupied West Bank."

UNRWA was set up to provide services for displaced Palestinian refugees. Whatever its value as a humanitarian organ, it has been used as a tool by Palestinians for disseminating antisemitic propaganda as well as hostility to Israel. Shamefully, UNRWA allowed Hamas to use its property for war crimes, as a storage area for missiles, rockets, and other weapons during the Gaza War.

Similarly, the UN Conference on the Status of Women, CSW, a group that includes Sudan and Iran, has been misused to serve a political purpose, often anti-American and always anti-Israeli. At its annual meetings in March 2015 and on March 24, 2016, the CSW issued a condemnation of only one country, Israel. In 2016 CSW in a one sided vote, 27 to 2 (US and Israel), called for a review of the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women.

CSW forgot that according to the World Economic Forum Report, Israel is about on the same level as the U.S. for female political empowerment. Of the 120 members of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, 27 are women.

Women also were part of the UN World Conference on Racism (Durban Review Conference). At both its September 2001 and April 2009 sessions the State of Israel became the main target. In the latter session the then Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, whose sanity was questionable, referred to Israel as "totally racist," and that the Holocaust was used as a pretext for aggression against Palestinians.

Israeli medical facilities and hospitals have provided health care every day for wounded Syrians fleeing the brutal civil war, and also for Palestinians. Israel has set up a program providing cardiac surgery to 3,500 children from 48 countries. The World Health Organization, WHO, remains unaware of this. In May 2015, by 104 to 4 with 6 abstentions, and 65 absent, WHO singled out Israel as the violator of health rights of the inhabitants in "occupied Syria Golan." A year later, on May 25, 2016, by a similar vote of 107-8-8 and 58 absent, Israel was still the only violator of "mental, physical, and environmental health rights." Among the 8 countries opposed were the US, Canada, Australia, and Israel. The WHO consequently commissioned a delegation to report on health conditions in "occupied Palestinian territory and in "occupied Syria Golan."

Perhaps most disappointing in the shabby UN behavior has been the resolutions of UNESCO established in 1945 to foster peace and culture. Its preoccupation with alleged misdeeds of Israel has been excessive and concentrated. Ignoring the historic connection of Judaism to the Temple Mount, and the site there of two ancient Jewish temples, UNESCO has been erasing any such connection. Indeed, it has accepted the Palestinian Narrative of History, the rewriting of history. It has ignored two facts: the Temple area has been managed by the Waqf, controlled by Muslims of Jerusalem; and the Jordanian rule over the area from 1948 to 1967 did not allow Israelis access to the site.

The UNESCO resolution of April 15, 2016, submitted by seven Arab and Middle East Muslim states, referring to Israel as the "occupying power," spoke of the Mount as al-Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif, and to the Western Wall as Al-Buraq Plaza. Adopting the Palestinian formula, it condemned Israel for "illegal measures against the freedom of worship: at the "Muslim holy site of worship." The resolution, which also referred to Hebron and Bethlehem as "Palestinian sites" was passed by 33-6

and 17 abstentions.

Another resolution, proposed by Palestinians and Jordan, calling for a return to the “historic status quo that existed before the 1967 war,” presumably banning Jews and Christians from entering the mount was to be presented at the UNESCO meeting in July 2016 in Istanbul, but has been delayed because of the attempted coup in that city. The draft resolution found Israel guilty of intrusive constructions, tunneling and underground excavations, and aggressions against religious sites and prayer places.

Among its other decisions the 58 members of the Executive Committee of UNESCO on October 21, 2015, in again accepting Palestinian falsifications, condemned Israeli “aggressions and illegal measures against the freedom of worship” as well as the “persistent excavations and works (in fact archeological work) in East Jerusalem.”

The various UN institutions are misusing valuable real estate in New York, Paris, Geneva, Rome, and other places. The present annual UN budget is \$5.4 billion, of which the United States provides \$2.9 billion. Either the Obama administration or the next US President should have as a high priority seeking out less expensive places for UN operations unless all the UN institutions with their passionate intensity end their relentless and dishonorable discrimination against and concentration on the State of Israel and begin to deal with pressing real problems of the other 192 UN nations.