

**The Amuta for NGO Responsibility, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

Durban and the Exploitation of Human Rights for Political Warfare  
A Troubling Legacy Continues

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The 2001 Durban Conference, and, in particular, the accompanying NGO Forum, marked a very troubling development in the history of universal human rights, and in the role of the United Nations in this process. Far from marking the end of Apartheid in South Africa and the launch of a global effort to eradicate racism and discrimination, Durban’s primary legacy is one of hatred directed at Israel, the nation-state of the Jewish people.

From the poorly advised choice of location of the prepcom, from which Jewish and Israeli delegates were banned, and through the final declarations, which singled out Israel on the basis of double standards and false allegations, the history of the Durban process is one of failure. As noted by Prof. Irwin Cotler, who led the Canadian delegation, as well as the late Representative Tom Lantos, from the United States, and many others, this anti-racism conference became itself a vehicle for racism directed against Israel.

The NGO Forum was particularly notorious in this respect, and many of the organizations that participated actively in this moral disaster have sought to remove the stain on their own moral claims. The Final Declaration was abused to reignite the infamous “Zionism if racism” and remind us of the rejection of UN General Assembly Resolution 181 in 1947 –the original two-state solution for both the Jewish and Palestinian Arab people. The Durban NGO declaration calling for the “complete international isolation” of Israel through the exploitation of the real suffering under Apartheid continued the immoral campaign to deny the legitimate rights of the Jewish people to self-determination.

The Durban NGO Forum also launched the immoral boycott, divestment and sanctions movement --- BDS – which this Council is being asked to endorse in its actions. BDS is a form of political warfare and demonization, and the most troubling legacy of the Durban failure.

I would ask the members of this Council to bring this tragic chapter in the history of human rights to a close, 13 years too late.