



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
26 June 2024

English only

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## Human Rights Council

Fifty-sixth session

18 June–12 July 2024

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by Institute for NGO Research, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[27 May 2024]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **Whitewashing Violence and Racism of “Free Palestine” Protests**

For 20 years, NGO Monitor (a project of the Institute for NGO Research) has studied and analyzed the presence of antisemitism within the human rights and humanitarian community. Antisemitism from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has become an enduring feature of political discourse about Israel and Zionism – paralleling a resurgence of physical violence against Jews over the past decade. Many institutions and individuals who claim to represent human rights and humanitarian values instead promulgate antisemitic rhetoric and tropes and condone antisemitism from executives and staff, with little to no repercussions. These organizations also consistently dismiss considerations of antisemitism as a human rights issue.

This dynamic is prevalent, within the most powerful global organizations and numerous NGOs active within the UN system. Many also receive EU- and European-government funding which is then used to carry out campaigns of disinformation, incitement, and discrimination. At the same time, antisemitic incidents continue to be met with apathy and the absence of accountability and public debate, in particular from the very institutions and governments that fund these NGOs and from their supporters.

NGO antisemitism has skyrocketed following the October 7 massacre perpetrated by Hamas and other Gaza-based terror groups – the most brutal attack against Jews since the Holocaust and the worst single-day atrocity since 9/11. One might have expected that, in reaction to the horrific murder, rape, torture, dismembering, and kidnapping, the human rights community would unite in condemnation of Hamas, alongside support for Israelis. Instead, NGOs that claim to promote universal human rights denied or justified the massacre, vilified Israel, and expressed antipathy for Jews. They have backed future violent attacks under the guise of “resistance”, promoted the ethnic cleansing of Jews from the Middle East, and seek the destruction of Israel. The structural antisemitism that has infected global human rights institutions was sharply manifested in the surreal denials regarding testimonies of sexual violence and other evidence of unspeakable, inhumane brutality.

Many of these NGOs are supported by governments and the UN through development and humanitarian programs. The EU and European governments in particular have enabled NGO antisemitism and demonization by turning a blind eye to the impacts of their funding.

In addition, it is clear that years of NGO antisemitic activities have greatly contributed to the overall process of steadfast radicalization of Palestinian society, dehumanization of Jews, and a complete inability to even condemn the massacre of October 7. These campaigns have inflamed the conflict rather than support its negotiated resolution.

However, since October 7, there have been some signs of increased accountability: the European Union, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, and Austria suspended some or all of their funding to organizations promoting antisemitism, hate, and violence, pending investigations.

### **Violent Protests**

While the report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity on the “Participation of civil society organizations seeking to express international solidarity through transnational, international and regional networks” discusses the international solidarity marches around the world which led to civic spaces being “diminished,” the report whitewashes the discriminatory hate speech, incitement, and violent nature of many of these protests. These worldwide protests are marked by highly disruptive tactics, including endangering planes by launching balloons at JFK airport, (1) vandalizing storefronts,(2) and blocking highways leading to delays of organ transplants.(3) Harassment and attacks of Jews and Jewish institutions is also a cornerstone of these activities. The Rapporteur also ignores that these protests are well-organized and funded by state actors - notably the Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamist radicals, and designated terrorist organizations.

In October 2023, just days after the brutal Hamas massacre, 65 police officers were injured during “Free Palestine” protests in Berlin. According to a statement published by the Berlin police, “colleagues have been injured in the past hours due to stones, burning liquids and acts of resistance, among other things.”(4) In November 2023, more than 80 people were charged in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland over alleged crimes and violence linked to pro-Palestinian protests.(5) The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’s officials arrested a 22-year-old man on suspicion of making threats to kill while shouting antisemitic slurs. In May 2024, Australian politician Jacinta Allan accused pro-Palestinian protesters of bringing “violence, homophobia and antisemitism to the front door of state conference.” In the United States of America, pro-Palestinian protestors tried to climb the walls the White House, smearing red paint on the walls and shouting “Allahu akbar” and “intifada revolution.”(6)

Instead of a legitimate expression of opposition, these protests have utilized physical violence masquerading as “social justice.” Ignoring the violent nature of these protests, the calls for genocide of and the destruction of the Jewish people, and supporting terrorist organizations like Hamas sends a very dangerous message of engendering an environment where antisemitism can flourish.

### **Campus Antisemitism**

Colleges and universities have become dangerous places for Jewish students – as extensively documented by organizations with expertise on campus antisemitism. Activists at anti-Israel rallies have continued to justify and celebrate the atrocities. According to Hillel International, as of May 23, there have been 1,605 total reported antisemitic incidents on college campuses since October 7, “a 700% increase compared to last year.”(7)

“Free Palestine” protests have gone beyond legitimate criticism of Israel, and are centered on property destruction, and calling for Israel’s destruction and the targeting and violent harassment of Jews. In October, Jewish students were locked in the library at Cooper Union while “Free Palestine” adherents formed a violent mob trapping and threatening the students.(8) A hate-rally organized in Washington Square Park, near NYU’s campus, featured a demonstrator with an antisemitic sign reading, “Please keep the world clean,” and a figure placing a Star of David in a trashcan.(9) Video from the event showed dozens of demonstrators chanting “globalize the intifada” - a call to repeat Hamas’ massacres and rapes. In response to a question during Congressional hearing with the heads of Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and the University of Pennsylvania, asking if calling for the genocide of the Jews is against the schools’ codes of conduct, all three answered that it depends on the “context.”(10)

The violent marches, rampages, and riots seen on campuses and across the globe are reminiscent of antisemitic pogroms at the turn of the Century; Nazi harassment of Jews in the 1930s; and KKK organized attacks on African Americans in the Jim-Crow South. It is highly disturbing that these aspects are erased in the Rapporteur’s report.

### **Conclusion**

Antisemitism is an ongoing and pervasive problem, and combating it must be considered a human rights issue alongside all other forms of discrimination. Not only does the failure to tackle antisemitism harm the integrity and credibility of the UN system and its reporting, the institution should be a leader in the fight against antisemitism - not a place where Jews are routinely subject to harassment and the mass violence committed against them is erased.

The genocidal antisemitism of the October 7 massacre triggered a frightening increase in attacks targeting Jews around the world. The international human rights community is complicit in both participating in blatant antisemitism and engendering an environment where it can flourish. The funders of human rights and humanitarian NGOs, as well as contributors to UN agencies – especially government sponsors – must ensure that their support does not facilitate antisemitism.

- 1 <https://www.dailywire.com/news/anti-israel-protesters-create-chaos-delay-flights-at-jfk-airport-on-new-years-day>
- 2 [https://www.wsj.com/business/hospitality/starbucks-ceo-takes-on-chains-social-media-controversy-over-israel-hamas-war-1fe4e3dc?mod=business\\_feat2\\_hospitality\\_pos1](https://www.wsj.com/business/hospitality/starbucks-ceo-takes-on-chains-social-media-controversy-over-israel-hamas-war-1fe4e3dc?mod=business_feat2_hospitality_pos1)
- 3 <https://abc7news.com/bay-bridge-protesters-chp-arrests-traffic/14069929/>
- 4 <https://www.politico.eu/article/65-police-hurt-violent-protest-berlin-palestine-israel-hamas/>
- 5 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/uk-charge-pro-palestinian-protesters-gaza-b2451471.html>
- 6 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gk296LPkX0A&ab\\_channel=HindustanTimes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gk296LPkX0A&ab_channel=HindustanTimes)
- 7 <https://www.hillel.org/antisemitism-on-college-campuses-incident-tracking-from-2019-2023/>
- 8 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jewish-students-barricade-in-nycs-cooper-union-as-protesters-chant-free-palestine/>
- 9 <https://nypost.com/2023/10/25/metro/nyc-public-school-students-brandish-antisemitic-signs/>
- 10 <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/us/harvard-mit-penn-presidents-antisemitism.html>