

The United Nations' Institutional Racism

Judith Bergman • July 19, 2020

- There is simply a whopping international double-standard here on what passes as institutional racism and what does not -- and it needs to be acknowledged.
- At the very least, people might question whether an organization that has made discrimination against one country in the world one of its operating principles... is worth the exorbitant cost. The United States, for instance, as the organization's single largest donor, in 2018 funded the UN to the tune of \$10 billion.
- At a minimum, instead of paying a mandatory „slightly less than one-fifth of the body's collective budget“ every year, the US -- and the UN -- would fare far better if the US paid for what it wanted and got what it paid for. At present, the UN has long ceased being a force for good and is being used, first, to prop up its majority of un-transparent, unaccountable anti-democratic despots, and second, to perpetuate conflicts -- largely at the US taxpayers' expense.
- All those who truly care about the eradication of discrimination and racism should ask themselves why, if racism is unacceptable everywhere else, it should still be a matter of course at the UN.

As accusations of „institutional“ racism in organizations, professions, universities and cultural institutions continue to make the headlines, no one is calling out the institutional racism of the United Nations (UN).

What is institutional racism?

The first entry on Google tells you, „*Institutional racism is a form of racism that is embedded as normal practice within society or an organization*“.

If you google „racism“, a Google dictionary defines it as:

„Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized“.

The UN counts all the states in the world as its members, and all are ostensibly equal under international law, to which the UN claims to adhere. According to its own rationale, therefore, all the member states in the UN should be treated equally by the organization's various bodies and be judged according to the same standards. If the UN would systematically single out a minority of only one member state to be condemned for alleged human rights abuses for example, while completely ignoring the documented human rights abuses of an entire host of member states, this double-standard would amount to systematic discrimination, or „racism“, against that state according to the definition of „institutional racism“ mentioned above.

This form of systematic discrimination, or „racism“, is in fact what the UN has been engaging in for decades against one country, Israel, a tiny state of roughly 8.7 million citizens -- with a land-mass roughly the size of New Jersey -- out of a total world population of 7.8 billion people:

The UN General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the UN Commission on Human Rights have passed a large number of resolutions and decisions against Israel. According to the human rights non-governmental organization (NGO), *UN Watch*:

„Every year, the General Assembly adopts some 20 resolutions against Israel and only 5 or 6 against the rest of the world combined, with one each on Iran, Syria and North Korea. The General Assembly adopts zero resolutions on systematic abusers like Cuba, China, and Saudi Arabia“.

The discrimination is too obvious to ignore. There are 193 member states in the UN. For 20 resolutions a year to be lobbed at the only democratic country in the Middle East, which actually observes human rights and equality under the law -- but only 5 or 6 at the remaining 192 states,

which include major violators of international law such as China, Russia, North Korea, Cuba, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Nigeria and Iran -- speaks of an extremely ingrained form of state-sponsored discrimination or „racism“.

China, a state of 1.4 billion people, continues to be the number one executioner in the world, according to Amnesty International. The Chinese Communist regime ruthlessly persecutes ethnic and religious minorities, and withholds from its own citizens the most basic human rights, such as freedom of expression, freedom of religion and freedom of assembly, as previously reported by Gatestone Institute. Every one of those rights is enshrined in the UN's *own* conventions and declarations. In addition, China continues to occupy Tibet, which it invaded in 1950, and where it has moved millions of ethnic Chinese to „Sinicize“ the area – in violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which states that an occupying power may not „deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.“ Even though China is a leading violator of international law and one of the most outrageous abusers of human rights, neither the General Assembly nor the UNHRC has condemned its actions.

There are countless other examples of UN member states who do not live up to even a fraction of the UN's treaties and declarations of human rights, yet those countries are never called out. The UNHRC has not passed a single resolution against Saudi Arabia, for instance, a country of more than 33 million people that largely continues to operate according to medieval human rights standards, despite the efforts of Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman to effect some reforms. Last year, the kingdom surpassed its own record for executions, according to Amnesty International, when it beheaded 184 people. Saudi Arabia only decided to end flogging a few months ago. The desert country, which takes up most of the Arabian Peninsula, also still operates a male guardianship system, which treats women as legal minors, so that they usually can only travel and perform the most mundane tasks, such as applying for a passport, under the supervision of a male guardian.

The UNHRC has not passed a single human rights resolution against Egypt, one of the top 5 most prolific executioners in 2019. There are countless other examples of countries with atrocious human rights records that are not only *not* called out by the UN and its human rights bodies, but actually serve on those bodies; countries such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Pakistan and Somalia, which all currently serve on the UN Human Rights Council.

In contrast, Israel's perceived and alleged crimes feature as a permanent item on the UNHRC's agenda, the so-called Item 7 Agenda, so that when the UNHRC is in session, Israel is always condemned. No other country, no matter how wanton its human rights abuses, is singled out.

Israel is also singled out in several other UN bodies, such as UNESCO, which set about systematically renaming ancient Jewish sites as if they were Muslim sites. The area of the Western Wall -- a retaining wall which is all that remains of the Jewish Second Temple that was destroyed by the Roman Legions in 70 CE, was renamed by UNESCO „The Al-Buraq Plaza“, after the steed that the Islamic *Hadiths* wrote carried Muhammad to the heavens and back. UNESCO has also renamed the Jewish sites of the Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem and Hebron's Tomb of the Patriarchs as „Palestinian sites.“ UNESCO deeply regrets“ that Israel has refused to remove the sites from its national heritage list.

Even the UN's World Health Organization (WHO), at its annual assembly, assigns Israel its own separate agenda item, number 14. In it, every year, Israel is condemned as a violator of „Palestinian health rights“ in the „Occupied Palestinian Territories, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan“.

The UN's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) „dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women“, also routinely singles out Israel for condemnation for „violating women's rights“, while countries such as Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia and Iran, some of the world's most dangerous countries for women, are not even mentioned. Not only is there no condemnation of Saudi Arabia -- where women are still treated as legal minors, and where campaigners for basic women's rights face long prison sentences -- but Saudi Arabia was even elected to the CSW a few years ago to assist in the task of „promoting women's rights“.

Regrettably, almost all UN member states, apart from the United States, appear to find this discriminatory treatment of just one country in the world to be completely normal and as matters should be. There is simply a whopping international double-standard here on what passes as institutional racism and what does not -- and it needs to be acknowledged.

Ironically, the institutional racism against Israel at the UN takes the focus away from countries that are in acute need of scrutiny -- which is possibly the reason for its success. Countries where women have few to no rights, where political opponents are tortured and stashed away in prisons or killed, and where people cannot speak their minds freely, get a pass. At the very least, people might question whether an organization that has made discrimination against one country in the world one of its operating principles -- as institutionalized in permanent agenda items and almost ritual condemnations -- is worth the exorbitant cost. The United States, for instance, as the organization's single largest donor, in 2018 funded the UN to the tune of \$10 billion.

At a minimum, instead of paying a mandatory „slightly less than one-fifth of the body's collective budget“ every year, the US -- and the UN -- would fare far better if the US paid for what it wanted and got what it paid for. At present, the UN has long ceased being a force for good and is being used, first, to prop up its majority of un-transparent, unaccountable anti-democratic despots, and second, to perpetuate conflicts -- largely at the US taxpayers' expense. The money saved could be put to better use repatriating American businesses and protecting the free world from America's most predatory adversaries.

Finally, all those who truly care about the eradication of discrimination and racism should ask themselves why, if racism is unacceptable everywhere else, it should still be a matter of course at the UN.