

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 23, 2023

His Excellency Mr. António Guterres  
Secretary-General  
United Nations  
760 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

His Excellency Volker Turk  
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Palais Wilson  
52 rue des Pâquis  
CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland

cc: Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield  
U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations  
United States Mission to the United Nations  
799 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Secretary General Antonio Guterres and High Commissioner Volker Turk,

We write to you today to express our opposition to Ms. Francesca Albanese continuing to serve as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories. As you know, reporting recently unearthed an open letter written by Special Rapporteur Albanese that contained outrageous antisemitic statements. In the open letter, which solicited funds for UNRWA during the 2014 conflict between Israel and the terror group Hamas, Ms. Albanese made the outrageous allegation that “America and Europe, one of them subjugated by the Jewish lobby, and the other by the sense of guilt about the Holocaust, remain on the sidelines and continue to condemn the oppressed — the Palestinians — who defend themselves with the only means they have (deranged missiles).”<sup>1</sup>

At the time of Ms. Albanese’s comments, she had previously been an employee for various UN agencies for 10 years, including for UNRWA.<sup>2</sup> It’s clear from Ms. Albanese’s statements that these comments were not simply a mistake, but rather a fundamental part of her worldview. Ms. Albanese made similar comments earlier this year that condemned the BBC being on the side of a purported “Israel lobby,” and addressed a Hamas conference in Gaza where she told the terrorist audience that “You have a right to resist this occupation.”<sup>3</sup> She has also trivialized the memory of the Holocaust on numerous occasions by attempting to falsely equate it to the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Times of Israel: UN Palestinian rights official’s social media history reveals antisemitic comments  
<https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-palestinian-rights-officials-social-media-history-reveals-antisemitic-comments/>

<sup>2</sup> Georgetown University: Francesca P. Albanese  
<https://isim.georgetown.edu/profile/francesca-p-albanese/>

<sup>3</sup> 2 senior UN envoys could face sanctions for terror-sympathizing remarks  
<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-724023>

<sup>4</sup> UN Palestinian rights official’s social media history reveals antisemitic comments  
<https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-palestinian-rights-officials-social-media-history-reveals-antisemitic-comments/>

Instead of taking responsibility for repeating age-old antisemitic tropes and her incitement to violence, Ms. Albanese attacks those who notice her public comments, falsely claiming that her comments were “wrongly mischaracterized as antisemitic.” However, these comments clearly do meet the definition of antisemitism as outlined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and adopted by 38 countries<sup>5</sup>, including the United States.<sup>6</sup>

Enough is enough. Ms. Albanese’s comments are only the latest in a pattern of antisemitic behavior and rhetoric at the UN, which is obsessively focused on the world’s only Jewish State. The UN General Assembly even went so far as to pass more resolutions criticizing Israel than all other nations combined in 2022. Additionally, Israel is the only country subjected to two open-ended UN investigations. These investigations are led by UN officials who have demonstrated a hostile bias towards Israel and are on the record making antisemitic comments. This includes UNHRC Commission of Inquiry commissioner Miloon Kothari,<sup>7</sup> who questioned “why [Israel is] even a member of the United Nations” and repeated the antisemitic canard that “social media is controlled largely by... the Jewish lobby.” This also includes recent comments by UNRWA employees that led to them being placed on leave.<sup>8</sup> This pattern seriously undermines not only the UN’s credibility on issues in Israel and the Palestinian territories, but also the UN’s commitments to its own chartered principles of tolerance, equal treatment, and impartiality.

You have stated that “there is no room for antisemitism in the UN,” but it seems you do have room for Special Rapporteur Albanese and others who have repeatedly made statements that are antisemitic. Failure to take meaningful action on repeated instances of antisemitism by UN officials undermines the UN’s credibility. We urge you to demonstrate that the UN is capable of genuinely addressing antisemitism by removing Ms. Albanese from her post.

Sincerely,



Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress



Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

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<sup>5</sup> Information on endorsement and adoption of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism  
<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism/adoption-endorsement>

<sup>6</sup> State Department: Defining Antisemitism  
<https://www.state.gov/defining-antisemitism/>

<sup>7</sup> US Mission to International Organizations in Geneva  
<https://geneva.usmission.gov/2022/07/28/statement-on-antisemitic-remarks-by-a-commissioner-of-the-israel-coi/>

<sup>8</sup> UNRWA places 6 staffers on leave for incitement in social media posts  
<https://www.timesofisrael.com/unrwa-places-6-staffers-on-leave-for-incitement-in-social-media-posts/>



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