

The Rabbi can Teach the United Nations: Never Again.

by Michael Curtis



Do nothing till you hear from me. Pay attention to what the UN is doing. Who are you going to believe, me or your lying eyes?

One of the newest political and intellectual exercises is the search for “root causes,” the core issue that leads to a chain of events and effects which can then be examined and become the basis for action. Noticeably, in place of a policy for action, President Joe Biden on February 2, 2021, issued an executive order that called for the development of a “root causes strategy,” that addresses the reasons for illegal migration from Latin American countries into the U.S.

The United Nations is also on the track of root causes, if a single focused way. The misnamed UN Human Rights Council, UNHRC, held a special session on the “grave human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.” It resolved on May 27, 2021 to establish an ongoing commission of inquiry to investigate “all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability, and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression, based on national, ethnic, racial, or religious identity.” The UNHRC essentially calls for investigation of Israel actions in the “Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem, and of alleged

violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of international human rights law. It will make recommendations on measures to be taken by states to ensure respect for international law in the OPT including East Jerusalem. The commission is mandated to report to the UN General Assembly and the UNHRC every year.

Two things are notable. The resolution for this one-sided inquiry was proposed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the collective voice of 57 states of which 49 have Muslim majorities, which calls for investigating any and all alleged violations by Israel.

Secondly, no open-ended investigation has been levelled by UN bodies against any other state.

The international community needs to be reminded once again that Israel is the only member state in the UN that is automatically censured for taking defensive military action to ensure the security of its population.

The UN investigation focuses solely on the response of Israel to the conflict, Operation Guardian of the Walls, an 11-day war initiated by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists in May 2021, supposedly over differences over a small amount of property in an East Jerusalem area. Hamas launched more than 4,000 rockets and missiles, some long range, against civilian targets in Israel, in Jerusalem. Tel Aviv area, and south Israel, but the UN is not investigating those actions or their root cause.

In response to the 4,000 rockets the Israeli air force tried to disable the terrorist attack sites, killing 260 Palestinians, mostly militants, but the UN, not surprisingly, estimated that less than half the Palestinians killed were militants.

The conclusion of any inquiry had already been predetermined. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet,

former socialist president of Chile, called on Israel to allow an independent probe of its military action in the conflict. Yet she already stated that Israeli airstrikes in densely populated areas resulted in a high level of civilian fatalities and injuries, as well as the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure. Such attacks, she said, may constitute war crimes. These strikes, she continued, are indiscriminate and fail to distinguish between military and civilian objects, and their use constitutes a clear violation of international humanitarian law.

Sentence first, verdict afterwards. The UNHRC had voted in May 2021 by 24-9 and 14 abstentions for a Commission of Inquiry. The UN General Assembly voted on December 23, 2021 to approve the funding of this multi-million dollar open ended Commission which will investigate all underlying "root causes" of recurrent tensions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The new Commission will have three expert members, 24 permanent staff, and an annual budget more than \$5 million. The Commission was approved by 125 countries, with the U.S. Israel, and 6 others against, and 34 abstained, including Canada, Germany, and Australia.

At the same time, the UN, illustrating its partiality, is funding and re-entering in partnership with the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, established to help Palestinian farmers but affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine which Israel has designated as a terrorist organization. The UN is ignoring its Security Council Resolution 2462 of 2019 that warns against the use of nonprofit organizations and donations to terrorist organizations and calls on member states to prevent the financing of terrorism.

It is high time that the UN and its various institutions took lessons from the Rabbi, either in English or in Hebrew, as well as honoring him. Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker, the 46-year-old rabbi at Beth Israel synagogue at Colleyville, Texas,

a city of 25,000 people, about 15 miles from Fort Worth showed the UN and the world an outstanding example of prudent and level-headed behavior, calm presence and comforting. Originally from Lansing, Michigan, he was educated at the University of Michigan, became ordained and has had positive relations with local groups in his area and has organized interfaith gatherings.

The Rabbi was leading Shabbot service on Saturday January 17, 2022, when an armed intruder entered the synagogue and held him and three, later two, hostage. The terrorist Malik Faisal Akram was a 44-year-old British citizen of Pakistani origin who had entered the U.S. two weeks earlier on a tourist visa. A man with no regular job or income, he had a British criminal record for drug deals, violent disorder, and driving offenses.

After 11 hours when the terrorist grew increasingly belligerent and threatening, the Rabbi threw a chair at him and was able to escape with his two remaining congregants. An FB Swat team then entered the synagogue and killed the terrorist.

Three things can be said. First, the Rabbi and his people escaped, by their own prudent and sensible behavior; they were not released, rescued, or freed by outside help.

Secondly, there was clear acknowledgement of the intended victims without any UN obfuscated language. Jews were deliberately targeted, even if ostensibly the terrorist demanded the release of Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani woman, educated at MIT and Brandeis, in prison for 86 years for trying to kill U.S. army officers in Afghanistan in 2008 and planning to target U.S. locations, the Empire State building, Brooklyn Bridge and the Statue of Liberty.

The UN should praise the Rabbi and denounce yet another of the increasing number of attacks on Jews; according to the last tracked estimate, 2,024 antisemitic attacks occurred in the

U.S. in 2020. The UNHRC can have no doubt: the terrorist Akram made a phone call to his brother in England, ranting about “f...Jews.” and urged British Muslims to launch jihad in the U.S. saying, “I’ll go down a martyr.”

Thirdly, the Rabbi explained his action during the ordeal had benefited from his attendance at multiple security courses, especially the Security Community Network founded in 2004 by a coalition of Jewish organizations.

In a speech in September 2006, then Secretary-General Kofi Anan stated that Israel was often unfairly judged by the international body and its various organization. After the example of the sensible Rabbi in Texas, it is a hopeful sign and a remarkable symbolic gesture, that the UN General Assembly, on January 21, 2022, the 80th anniversary of the infamous Wannsee Conference for the Final Solution, approved an Israeli sponsored resolution by consensus, except for Iran which “dissociated” itself from it. The resolution condemned any denial of the Holocaust and urged all nations and social media companies to talked action. The motto for the UN should be Never Again.