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Written statement* submitted by United Nations Watch, 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.

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* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Antisemitic and terrorist incitement by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas

Antisemitism is on the rise around the world, said UN Secretary-General António Guterres on 26 June 2019. The “multi-headed monster” of intolerance, he told the informal meeting of the General Assembly on Combating Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Racism and Hate, has created a visible and violent “tsunami of hatred” that is gathering speed across the world.

Several groups have published statistics on the alarming increase in antisemitism, including the European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

United Nations Watch is especially concerned by data that the highest rates of antisemitism are found in Middle East and North Africa even though the Jewish population in these areas is almost non-existent, as the majority of Jews were forced out of these countries after Israel was formed.

Widespread antisemitism among Middle Eastern Muslims impacts the safety of Jews worldwide. According to the December 2018 FRA survey, when respondents were asked to identify the perpetrators of antisemitic attacks, the highest number (30%) identified the perpetrator as being someone with Muslim extremist views.¹

Like elsewhere in the Middle East, no Jews reside in the territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas. Yet Palestinian society is routinely inundated with antisemitic incitement by Palestinian officials and through the education system and the media. This endangers the lives of Israelis.

State parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), like the State of Palestine, have an obligation to eliminate racial incitement and to use the education and media to teach tolerance and peace (Articles 4 and 7). It is also known that racial incitement may lead to “atrocious crimes, which in the words of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, “do not generally happen suddenly or spontaneously.” Mr. Guterres noted that a common sign of an impending atrocious crime is “the dissemination of hate speech—messages in public discourse and the media, including social media, which spread hostility and encourage people to commit violence against specific communities, often based on their identity.”²

In the case of Israel, there is a clear link between Palestinian antisemitic incitement and violent terrorist attacks targeting Israeli Jews.

Antisemitic themes repeated by Palestinian officials include:

- Jews have no historical connection to Palestine
- Israel and Zionism must be eliminated
- Palestine must be liberated from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea
- Terrorists are heroes
- Jews are filthy
- Jews are usurers
- Jews control the world

¹ Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism, second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU, European Union Agency For Fundamental Rights (December 2018), p. 53, https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf.

² Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocious Crimes, UN Office of Genocide Prevention (July 2017), http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/publications-and-resources/Plan%20of%20Action_Religious-rev4.pdf.

- Jews are responsible for all the problems in the world
- Jews try to poison Palestinians

President Abbas himself spreads antisemitic incitement in his public speeches and statements, including in these examples:

Repeating libel that Israel poisoned Arafat: Speaking to members of the press in Cairo, Abbas suggested Israel was trying to kill him and said: “They can also kill me with poison, as they poisoned the late President Yasser Arafat...” (Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, Jan. 15, 2019).³ Glorifying and inciting terrorism: In a speech praising Palestinians who committed terrorist attacks against Israelis, Abbas said: “Even if we have only one penny left it will only be spent on the families of the Martyrs and the prisoners...[who are] paving the way for Palestine’s independence...We view the Martyrs and prisoners as stars in the sky of the Palestinian people...and they have priority in everything.” (Official PA TV, July 24, 2018).⁴

Spewing classical antisemitism: In a speech to the Palestinian National Council, the legislative body of the PLO, Abbas spewed classic antisemitism, claiming the Jews are not “Semites,” that they are descendants of the “Khazar Kingdom,” that Jews have no historical connection to the land of Israel, and arguing that the Jews of Europe were hated “not due to their religion, but rather due to their social role...that was connected to usury, and banks...” (Official PA TV, May 2, 2018).⁵

Blaming Israel for all the world’s problems: In a speech on the Public Service Ethics Code, Abbas claimed: “The international community is becoming more and more convinced that the occupation of the Palestinian state by Israel is the reason for all the disasters that the region and the world are suffering from...” (Official PA TV, March 12, 2017).⁶

Inciting to terrorism: At the beginning of the 2015-2016 wave of terror, Abbas incited terrorism saying: “We bless every drop of blood that has been spilled for Jerusalem” and referred to Jews as filthy saying: “The Al-Aqsa [Mosque] is ours...and they have no right to defile it with their filthy feet. We will not allow them to...” (Official PA TV, Sep. 17, 2015).⁷

Following President Abbas’s example, PA officials spew Jew-hatred and terrorist incitement as a matter of routine, including in the following examples.

Advocating genocide against the Jews: On Iranian television, Fatah official Abbas Zaki rejects idea of a two-state solution, stating that the Palestinian state would be “from the [Jordan] River to the [Mediterranean] Sea” and that the “the Jews want to gather so they will be annihilated. Nobody accepts them.” (Al-Alam TV, May 29, 2018).⁸

Antisemitic libel: PLO prisoners’ official publishes op-ed claiming that Israel keeps Palestinian “Martyrs [i.e., killed terrorists]” in freezers in fear of a “Talmudic [i.e., Jewish] legend” about their souls remaining alive. (Palestine News Network, Oct. 11, 2017).⁹

³ Abbas and Fatah official accuse Israel of inciting against the Palestinian leadership and attempting to assassinate Abbas, “as they poisoned” Arafat, PMW (Jan. 15, 2019), https://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=834&doc_id=27187.

⁴ Abbas vows continued payments to terrorist prisoners who are ‘stars in the sky’ and have ‘priority in everything,’ PMW (July 24, 2018), http://www.palwatch.org/site/modules/videos/videos/pal/videos.aspx?fld_id=latest&doc_id=26252.

⁵ Jews’ usury caused Antisemitism – speech by PA Chairman Abbas, PMW (May 2, 2018) https://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=25581.

⁶ Palestinian News Item, PMW (March 12, 2017), https://www.palwatch.org/site/modules/print/preview.aspx?fi=834&doc_id=20652.

⁷ Abbas: We won’t allow Jews’ ‘filthy feet’, PMW (Sep. 17, 2015), https://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=15714

⁸ Fatah official: “Allah willing, our state will be from the [Jordan] River to the [Mediterranean] Sea,” PMW (May 29, 2018), http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=1100&doc_id=26027.

⁹ Op-ed by PLO Prisoners’ official, PMW (Oct. 11, 2017), https://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=1100&doc_id=24294.

Denying Jewish ties to Israel: PLO official Saleh Rafat states on PA TV that Jewish historical ties to the land of Israel is “a Zionist invention,” and the Jews are in “Palestine” because “Europe wanted to get rid of the Jews...” (Official PA TV, Nov. 15, 2017).¹⁰

Denying Jewish ties to Temple Mount: PA Security Forces spokesman claims that the basis of the religious conflict in Jerusalem is “the extremist Israeli government’s insistence on taking control of the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the pretext of the Temple myth.” (WAFA, Official PA news agency, July 16, 2017, referring to Israel’s installation of metal detectors for security reasons).¹¹

Likewise, Hamas officials routinely call for the destruction of Israel and include antisemitic motifs in their speeches. Some examples are below.

Antisemitic incitement: Senior Hamas official Ismail Radwan rallies rioters at Gaza March of Return, referring multiple times to the Jews as “apes and pigs” who “will be burned,” and adding that “the Jews and Zionists are your enemies and the enemies of the Arab and Islamic nation.” (Ismail Radwan’s Facebook page, Dec. 27, 2018).¹²

Antisemitic incitement: Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh rallies Gaza rioters with antisemitic chants such as the famous call to kill the Jews, “Khaybar, Khaybar, O Jews, the army of Muhammad will return,” cries of “death to Israel,” and the promise to eliminate Israel “we shall never forget Palestine from the [Mediterranean] Sea to the [Jordan] River.” (Palestinian web sources, May 11, 2018).¹³

Calling for Israel’s destruction: Hamas Gaza leader Yahya Sinwar rejects Israeli and U.S. demands for Hamas to disarm, and proclaims that Hamas is done discussing recognizing Israel and is only debating “when to wipe out Israel.” (Shehab news agency, Oct. 19, 2017).¹⁴

Antisemitic libel: Hamas member of PA parliament Marwan Abu Ras calls the Jews “the most impure people,” accuses them of spreading “usury,” “porn,” “drugs,” and “AIDS among young Muslims,” and calls to kill the Jews proclaiming that “everything on this earth hates the members of the impure religion.” (YouTube Channel of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, Jan. 6, 2017).¹⁵

We call on UN human rights officials, including the High Commissioner and the Special Rapporteurs on racism and religious freedom, as well as UN member states, to strongly condemn this antisemitic incitement.

¹⁰ Palestinian News Item, PMW (Nov. 15, 2017),

https://www.palwatch.org/site/modules/print/preview.aspx?fi=1100&doc_id=24357.

¹¹ Palestinian News Item, PMW (July 16, 2017),

https://www.palwatch.org/site/modules/print/preview.aspx?fi=1100&doc_id=24979.

¹² A senior Hamas figure delivers a speech replete with anti-Semitic motifs, The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (Dec. 27, 2018), <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/senior-hamas-figure-delivers-speech-replete-anti-semitic-motifs-yet-another-expression-hamass-long-standing-tradition-anti-semitism/>.

¹³ Amid antisemitic and “death to Israel” chants, Hamas political bureau chairman Ismail Haniyeh vows: We shall never recognize Israel, MEMRI (May 11, 2018), <https://www.memri.org/tv/hamas-political-bureau-head-haniyeh-we-shall-never-recognize-israel>.

¹⁴ Dov Lieber, Hamas chief: We won’t discuss recognizing Israel, only wiping it out, Times of Israel (Oct. 19, 2017), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-chief-we-wont-discuss-recognizing-israel-only-wiping-it-out/>.

¹⁵ Palestinian News Item, PMW (Jan. 6, 2017),

https://www.palwatch.org/site/modules/print/preview.aspx?fi=1100&doc_id=20237; Palestinian News Item, PMW (Jan. 6, 2017),

https://www.palwatch.org/site/modules/print/preview.aspx?fi=1100&doc_id=20238.