

An appeal sent by Hanna Kawas to the supporters of the Palestinian people to boycott the National Post and the Vancouver Sun for their biased reporting (see below), August 2001

Dear friends of the Palestinian people;

The National Post published on July 30, 2001 an editorial under the title "Anti-racism, in name only". The Vancouver Sun on July 31, 2001 reprinted the same editorial as a "Guest Editorial" under the title "The West should shun conferences where the racism deck is stacked". On August 1, 2001, the Vancouver Sun published an opinion piece by Gerald M. Steinberg under the title "Canada shouldn't support condemnations of Israel".

It is very clear the role the "National Post" plays across Canada as an apologist and a propagandist for Israel. It is also clear the role the Vancouver Sun plays regionally in support of Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian people.

It is about time that we take a stand in support of the Palestinian people's struggle against Israeli occupation and racism. It is about time that we make these yellow rags pay for supporting Israeli war crimes, occupation and human rights violations.

It is about time to start a boycott campaign against these two papers that are very clearly unbalanced and are violating journalistic ethics.

Stop your subscriptions to the National Post and the Vancouver Sun. Stop advertising in both. Stop carrying them in your stores, work places, schools and your private businesses. Start an educational campaign in schools, universities, work places, community organizations and trade unions, to explain why we are boycotting these two papers and urge people to support us. Do not give these papers any legitimacy for their phony objectivity, until they change their biased editorial policy. Publicize this boycott with any available media and communication outlets.

Yours in struggle  
Hanna Kawas  
Host, Voice of Palestine.  
Chairperson, Canada Palestine Association.  
Vancouver, Canada

[National Post](#), July 30, 2001 Anti-racism, in name only

Organizers of a major United Nations conference that will begin in Durban, South Africa next month do not have to look far to find examples of the "racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" that is the purported subject of the meeting. In Zimbabwe, just across the border, President Robert Mugabe is encouraging his thugs to prosecute a race war against white farmers. Further north, in Rwanda, Burundi and Congo, tribal hatred between the Hutu and Tutsi has led, directly or indirectly, to the death of at least three-million people in the past seven years. In Sudan, Khartoum's Islamic government sponsors a savage campaign of bombardment and chattel enslavement against Christians and animists. Racism and intolerance are rampant in other parts of the world as well: Macedonia is embroiled in ethnic conflict between its slavs and ethnic Albanians. In obscure corners of Indonesia, groups of Christians, Muslims, ethnic Malays and indigenous headhunters butcher one

another with spears and knives. And then there is Iran and the Arab Middle East, where homophobia and poisonous anti-Semitism are preached as de facto state religions. In Syria, articles that have appeared in the official Syria media describe the Holocaust as a "myth." The country's defence minister is the author of a book promoting the theory that Jews kill Gentiles and consume their blood. Bashar al-Assad, Syria's President, recently delivered a speech on the occasion of Pope John Paul II's visit to his country declaring that Jews "try to kill all the principles of divine faiths with the same mentality of betraying Jesus Christ and torturing Him."

Given all these clear examples of virulent hate and intolerance, what do many nations want to talk about when the Durban conference convenes on Aug. 31? Israel, naturally. Delegates at a UN-sponsored regional preparatory meeting in Tehran earlier this year singled out the democracy as a paragon of hate, accusing it of "a new kind of apartheid, a crime against humanity [and] a form of genocide." (Naturally, the numerous instances of human rights abuses and discrimination that are standard fare in Islamic theocracies and totalitarian police states went unmentioned.) And what most concerns African nations? Not Sudan nor Mauritania, apparently, where chattel slavery is still practised, but the West, most of which abolished slavery more than a century ago. At a separate official preparatory meeting held in Addis Ababa last year, a group of African experts concluded the Durban conference should address "measures for reparation, restoration and compensation for nations, groups and individuals affected by slavery and the slave trade, colonialism, and economic and political exclusion." They want cash, in other words -- presumably in addition to the billions Western nations already spend in the form of aid. Oh, and just in case anyone reading the document is suffering under the delusion that Mr. Mugabe and his thugs are also guilty of racism, the authors tell us "the legitimate claims of Africans concerning land of which they had been deprived as the result of colonization and racist policies, as in the case of Zimbabwe, should not be confused and interpreted as manifestations of racism." Thanks for the clarification.

In the past six months, U.S. President George W. Bush has gained our admiration for, among other things, his view that the United States should not go along with superficially noble but substantially flawed multilateral exercises simply for the sake of show. His administration's position on the Durban anti-racism conference agenda, the final version of which is now being debated in Geneva, is consistent with this position. "The conference should not equate Zionism with racism or take up the reparations matter. And if they do, the United States will not go," said a spokesman for Mr. Bush on Friday. "How can you say this is a conference to combat racism if it borders on anti-Semitism?"

Canada and European nations have resisted the temptation to criticize Mr. Bush's "unilateralist" approach on this issue, and some leaders have actually expressed support for the U.S. position. They are right to do so. Many of the Arab and Third World attendees at the Durban conference will be more interested in bashing Israel and ancient colonialists than in pursuing substantive measures aimed at redressing real examples of modern racism. If spurious issues appear on the conference agenda, Western nations should not dignify the event with their representation.

[Vancouver Sun](#) Last Updated: Wednesday 1 August 2001 Opinion  
Gerald M. Steinberg: Canada shouldn't support condemnations of Israel

In theory and from a safe distance, the dispatch of international peacekeeping forces and observers in war zones appears to be a very noble and humanitarian act. A neutral police force, standing between two nations that are armed to teeth and intent on destroying each other, has a strong appeal, particularly to Canadian sensibilities. Conflicts, however bitter and full of hatred, should be settled peacefully, through negotiations or the unbiased decisions of the United Nations.

However, on closer inspection, the experience in various parts of the world, and the Middle East, in particular, is far from positive. In most cases, instead of bringing peace and an end to murder and terrorism, and serving the cause of justice, the deployment of United Nations and international forces is counterproductive. It provides the hope, and the illusion, of peace, but ends up being a bitter disappointment, and often contributes to the carnage and injustice.

Indeed, for many cynical perpetrators and terrorists in the Third World, the gap between the hopeful theory and the bitter reality is precisely the reason for inviting United Nations peacekeepers. Behind the thin veneer of internationalism and the false rhetoric of human rights, the UN is a cynical and very political institution, whose actions often reflect the interests of the body's majority of undemocratic and often totalitarian states. On the ground, UN peacekeepers have failed miserably, becoming part of the problem rather than the solution.

When considering the issue of international peacekeepers in the Middle East, these factors cannot be ignored. Last year, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat opted to reject the compromise peace plans presented by Israel and President Clinton, and instead chose the path of terrorism and violence. One of his main goals was precisely to create a situation in which an international "peacekeeping" or "observer" force would be dispatched to the region.

Watching the ritual UN votes of condemnation against Israel, and its failures in Bosnia, Lebanon, and other "hotspots," Arafat knows that a UN or European force would be biased politically against Israel. He also understands that such a force would be a one-way filter, allowing Palestinian terrorism to continue, while shining the spotlight on Israeli military responses.

In addition, and crucial to Arafat's scenario, a sympathetic international "presence" would force Israel to cede territory to the Palestinians, while avoiding the need to recognize and negotiate a peace treaty directly with the Jewish State. For precisely these reasons, Israelis are adamantly opposed to such a force.

For Israel, the evidence of the failure of internationalization is very fresh and painful. Despite over 50 years of UN failures, beginning with the dysfunctional armistice commission established after the 1948 war, Israel agreed to try again in Lebanon. This conflict began in the 1970s, after the PLO started to use Southern Lebanon as a terrorist base, and continued for many years. In May 2000, Israel withdrew its forces from the security zone, in precise accordance with UN Resolution 425, and with the promise of a serious international effort to prevent the return of cross-border terrorist attacks.

However, the UN failed to deploy along the border and did not disarm the radical Hezbollah terrorists; attacks against Israel continue, leading to Israeli responses. But instead of providing security and helping to alleviate the conflict, the UN forces in the area are accused of assisting the terrorists.

Last October, three young Israeli soldiers were kidnapped by Hezbollah and -- in blatant violation of all basic humanitarian values -- their abductors have refused to provide any information on their condition. Their families do not even know if they are alive or dead. The terrorists passed close to the UN positions, but instead of stopping them, the international police took out their cameras and made a videotape of the kidnapping. This tape and other evidence was then kept secret for many months, and now the UN, stands accused of hiding, or perhaps aiding and abetting this crime.

In addition, with the active support of Iran and Syria (a prospective new member of the UN Security

Council!) the Hezbollah terrorists have deployed huge arsenals of rockets along the border with Israel. If war breaks out in this area, the UN and its members, including Canada, will share moral responsibility.

Another tragic but telling example is provided by the European Union, which dispatched observers to the area of Bethlehem to monitor the "ceasefire" declared in June. This small group was located in an area controlled by the Palestinian Authority and used by gunmen, who commandeered homes and opened fire on the Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo. The presence of observers succeeded in preventing the return of the gunmen and the area was quiet, but a few kilometres away, out of the range of the EU team, a group of terrorists was quietly preparing explosives for use by suicide bombers.

The terrorists chose this location precisely because it was close to the location of the observer force, and thus deemed to be protected from Israeli attacks. When one of the bombs detonated prematurely in a field near a Jerusalem stadium, the location and details of the bomb-making factory were revealed, and the Israeli army struck the cell's leaders. As part of the ritual of one-sided political condemnation, Israel was criticized for its response and for protecting the lives of its citizens, but the EU's failure to uncover and prevent the terrorist activity was totally ignored.

These failures are not unique to the Middle East, and other tragic examples can be found from Bosnia (including the terrible Srebrenica massacre, which took place under the noses of the UN forces from Holland in 1995), to Rwanda and Somalia.

The bottom line is that in international peacekeeping and similar activities, good intentions are not only inadequate, but are easily exploited and often contribute to murder and warfare. If Canada and other countries in the forefront of human rights and international law are serious, policy makers have to understand the full consequences of their actions, and prevent inhumane abuses. Blind and automatic support for these activities, based on wishful thinking and simplistic humanitarianism, is unacceptable. Before leading the charge for intervention against Israel, Canada's leaders should first take a more even-handed stance, and not vote for one-sided UN Security Council condemnations of Israel, and they should also invest the time and energy required to end the political and ideological abuses of the UN and its institutions.

Professor Gerald Steinberg, director of the Conflict Management and Negotiation Program at Bar-Ilan University, is an academic fellow of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research, based in Montreal.