

New Zealand Pro-Israel Groups Slam Their Government's Involvement in UN Resolution

When a United Nations Security Council resolution that was being circulated by Egypt was abruptly tabled after pressure from Israel and President-elect Donald Trump, UNSC Resolution 2334—a supposedly “watered-down” version of the original—was quickly circulated by New Zealand and other countries with less-than-favorable views of the Jewish state.

Pro-Israel groups in New Zealand are now expressing their outrage over their government's involvement in the fiasco. They have banded together and penned the following letter to Prime Minister Bill English:

We, the undersigned, are New Zealand citizens and residents, Jewish and non-Jewish, with a spectrum of political views, who write to express our condemnation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2334 (“Resolution”), and particularly the New Zealand Government's involvement in it.

We note at the outset that our dismay at the Resolution does not express a view on the matter of all such Jewish settlements outside of the 1949 armistice lines.

Our concern is that the Resolution is one-sided and continues the UN's woeful record of rewriting history and de-legitimizing the Jewish state. It is also counter-productive; undermining, rather than enhancing, the chances of peace in this complex and long-standing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. It widens the chasm between both sides, instead of building a bridge.

The U.N. is a deeply flawed institution whose inherent bias against Israel has been acknowledged by Secretary General

Ban-Ki Moon, and indeed Minister McCully. The U.N. has no credibility as regards the question of Israel and the Palestinians. The U.N. has excoriated Israel at every opportunity, while ignoring the failings of the Palestinians. The Security Council, riven with incompetence and political agendas and has failed to address the greatest atrocity of our time in Syria. It is not the forum to resolve or provide a mechanism for resolution of a long-standing dispute between two parties, especially when one is Israel. Only those parties themselves can arrive at a resolution, through direct negotiations.

However, there is now no incentive for the Palestinians to negotiate, because the outcome of any negotiations has been predetermined. The Resolution has granted the Palestinians more than they have themselves sought, so that they cannot now accept less through negotiations without losing face. The Resolution has declared what is "occupied Palestinian territory," being all land beyond the arbitrary 1949 armistice lines that resulted from a war initiated by the Arab states to eliminate the nascent Jewish state. This is land that Palestinians have never had sovereignty over, and that between 1949 and 1967 was occupied by Jordan. The Security Council has apparently enshrined a new principle of international law, that land acquired in a defensive war from an occupying power belongs to a third party who at the time of the war claimed no sovereignty over that land nor sought autonomy. It declares Jewish presence in these lands, a continual presence of thousands of years (except for the ethnic cleansing that occurred under Jordanian occupation) a "flagrant violation of international law." It therefore requires that these lands become Jew-free, while Arab Palestinians constitute 20 percent of Israel's population and enjoy the full benefits of citizenship.

The Resolution does not differentiate between the "blocs" and other settlements, although all previous negotiations

and the Palestinians themselves have done so. It has decreed that East Jerusalem, which includes the Old City, is under "occupation" and consequently that some 200,000 Jewish East Jerusalem residents are illegal settlers. It is extremely disturbing and devastating that it makes it illegal for Jews to attend Hebrew University or to pray at their most holy site, the Western Wall, the heart of Judaism, to which Jews have physically and spiritually directed their prayers for thousands of years. By doing so, the Resolution imperils the shared and very special foundation of Judaism and Christianity. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is now also in "occupied Palestinian territory".

The Resolution rewards Palestinian intransigence and incitement and glorification of terrorism. It does not hold the Palestinians to account for their corruption, human rights abuses and failures in developing the machinery of a democratic state and civic society. It ignores Israel's previous settlement offers. It empowers boycott, divestment and sanction against Israel, a country that contributes so much to the world in terms of science, innovation, medicine, technology, humanitarianism, the arts and counter-terrorism. It does not acknowledge the right of Jewish self-determination—indeed, its very premise violates that right. Settlements are blamed as the root cause of the failure to achieve a lasting resolution, rather than the continued Palestinian denial of sovereignty of the Jewish people over their indigenous homeland.

We are ashamed of the role of New Zealand in this travesty and feel betrayed by our government. New Zealand partnered with Malaysia, Senegal and Venezuela to sponsor the Resolution, countries which do not share our liberal Western values. The Resolution has been praised by Islamic Jihad and Hamas. This is nothing to be proud of. We believe Minister McCully has acted with questionable mandate and has for some time listened only to, and indeed gone so far as advocating

for, one side. He has overturned long-standing New Zealand policy and ignored expert advice. He has yet again brought mockery and scorn upon this country and the Government. He has desperately, under urgency (on the eve of Christmas and Chanukah) and without transparency, sought to secure a legacy on the last day of the Security Council's meeting during New Zealand's term.

He has indeed secured a legacy. However, it is one that has made the prospect of peace ever more distant for the reasons discussed above, and brought ignominy on New Zealand. It has caused opprobrium among international commentators, calls for boycotts of our goods by supporters of Israel around the world, and demands for an end to our burgeoning relationship with Israel, from which New Zealand has more to gain economically. This is even more distressing given the impending commemoration next year of 100 years since the ANZAC campaign in Beersheva, in which New Zealand played such a proud part in turning the tide of the war against the Ottoman Empire, and therefore a pivotal role in the establishment of Israel.

Minister McCully has also disenfranchised many—until now—loyal National party supporters.

As Prime Minister, we believe it is incumbent upon you to make a public statement on the Resolution and its implications.□ We also request that you meet urgently with representatives of this group.

The letter was signed by 858 individuals, including representatives of the following organizations:

- New Zealand Jewish Council
- International Christian Embassy Jerusalem New Zealand
- Auckland Hebrew Congregation
- Australasian Union of Jewish Students
- B'nai B'rith New Zealand

- Beth Shalom Synagogue Auckland
- Bridges for Peace
- Calvary Chapel New Zealand
- Celebrate Messiah New Zealand
- ChangePoint Church Tauranga
- Christian Friends of Israel New Zealand
- Christians 4 Israel
- City Glory Church
- Ebenezer Emergency Fund Trust New Zealand
- Ezekiel 33 Trust New Zealand
- Faithpointe Church – Auckland
- Hawkes Bay Friends Of Israel Association
- Jesus First Church
- Jewish Federation of New Zealand
- Pacific Pearls
- Praying for Israel Groups Tauranga
- South Wind Fellowship
- Te Hau Wairua
- The Church of the Rock International
- The Oasis Church – Napier
- Trumpet of Salvation to Israel
- Zionist Federation of New Zealand {eo}