

B'NAI B'RITH  INTERNATIONAL

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His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon  
Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

We write to express our outrage over the decision by the United Nations to censor part of an exhibition sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Israel. Three of the exhibition's panels—on Zionism, Jerusalem and Israeli Arabs—were reportedly rejected as being “inappropriate.” We urgently call on you to reverse this decision and allow the exhibition to be displayed in full.

There is nothing inappropriate in pointing out that Israel's Arab population—a minority that makes up 20 percent of the entire Israeli population—enjoys equal rights as citizens in a vibrant democracy. The rights that Arab citizens of Israel enjoy far exceed those of Arabs in any neighboring country in the Middle East. This is an indisputable fact. It is only a controversial notion for those for whom Israel can do no right.

Likewise, there is nothing inappropriate in discussing the eternal tie between Jews and Jerusalem. Jerusalem has played a unique and central role in Jewish history, and in the hearts and thoughts of the Jewish people. Jerusalem is where King David and Solomon and their successors ruled, where the First and Second Temple were housed until they were destroyed by the Babylonians and the Romans respectively. Jerusalem has had a continuous Jewish presence for thousands of years. This too is indisputable fact. It will forever be the capital of the State of Israel.

The real controversy is that the United Nations is seeking to censor an exhibition on the centrality of Jerusalem to the Jewish people. The real scandal is that the U.N. General Assembly continues to pass, on an annual basis, a resolution that states that Israel's proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is, “null and void and must be rescinded forthwith.” No amount of U.N. censorship can change the fact that Jerusalem is as key a capital of the nation-state of the Jewish people as Paris is to France or London is to the United Kingdom.

Finally, there is nothing inappropriate in the display on Zionism, the struggle of the Jewish people for a restoration of self-determination in our ancient homeland, Israel. Only a few months ago, you stood at the podium of an event at the U.N. to commemorate the shameful passage of the infamous U.N. General Assembly resolution 3379, which libelously equated Zionism with racism. You, rightly, noted that this resolution badly damaged the institution and it should be seen as a lesson that the U.N. must work to combat the two great evils that former Israeli Ambassador to the U.N. Chaim Herzog warned of in his famous rebuttal to the passage of resolution 3379—hatred and ignorance.

And yet, here we are again. The U.N. is once again working to delegitimize Zionism by censoring an exhibit on it. We trust that you will do the right thing and restore the exhibit so it can be complete and cohesive.

Sincerely,

Gary P. Saltzman  
President

Daniel S. Mariaschin  
Executive Vice President