



הארגון הבינלאומי של עורכי-דין ומשפטנים יהודים (ע"ר)
THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS (R.A.)

May 25, 2016

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

The International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, a UN-accredited NGO, writes to express its outrage at Iran's latest Holocaust cartoon contest.

As you know, Iran held this contest on May 14. Iran's Second International Holocaust Cartoons Contest commenced in February 2015. Iran asserted its first Holocaust cartoon contest, commenced in August 2006, was in response to the publication by a Danish newspaper of cartoons of Mohamed and that its second contest was in response to the Charlie Hebdo publication, claiming its contests are designed to show the double standard in the West's position on freedom of speech. The organizer of Iran's 2006 contest, Masoud Shojai, however, said "Actually, we will continue [organizing Holocaust cartoon contests] until the destruction of Israel."

The Iranian claim of free speech is open to critique in light of its history of Holocaust denial. In December 2006 Iran held its International Conference to Review the Global Vision of the Holocaust while on March 21, 2014, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei tweeted that the Holocaust "is an event whose reality is uncertain and if it has happened, it's uncertain how it has happened."

The danger in the denial of historic truths such as the Holocaust is that it can create an atmosphere of incitement which could lead to subsequent tragedies.

The late Alberto Nisman quoted Iran's former president Abolhassan Bani Sadr in his 2006 report on the AMIA bombing in Buenos Aires: "[Iran's terrorist] attacks constitute a message aimed at the Arab world, in order to show the Palestinians and the Arabs that Iran is present, inasmuch as the current regime plans to make itself the leader of the Islamic world."

While Iran claims to be motivated by concern for free speech, we submit that Iran is duplicitous in exploiting these events to further its political and strategic goals in contravention of the call of the Preamble of the UN Charter "to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors." Through its Holocaust cartoon contests and statements that Israel should cease to exist, one UN member state is threatening another, and the absence of condemnation from those in authority serves to embolden Iran to continue with its incitement and threats against Israel. Silence on this issue on the part of the UN in effect contributes to Iran's hostile and threatening actions.

Iran openly and successfully, continues articulating the call for the destruction of Israel and can be expected to continue with further Holocaust cartoon contests. There can be no justification for any UN member state to act in this manner towards another, and considering the geo-strategic realities, Iran's behavior is not only abhorrent but dangerous to the safety and well-being of the region.



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Iran thus deserves condemnation by the world community and its leaders and we therefore call on you to take the lead in this condemnation.

Sincerely,

Adv. Irit Kohn
President