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U.S. Reviewing Role in UN Human Rights Council

The Trump administration is reviewing its participation in the top United Nations human rights body, with an eye to reform and a balanced agenda that ends the forum's "obsession with Israel," a senior U.S. official said on Wednesday. "In order for this Council to have any credibility, let alone success, it must move away from its unbalanced and unproductive positions," Erin Barclay, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state, told the UN Human Rights Council. "As we consider our future engagements, my government will be considering the Council's actions with an eye toward reform to more fully achieve the Council's mission to protect and promote human rights." According to Ha'aretz, she cited ongoing abuses in Syria and North Korea, and noted in particular the top UN human rights body's long-standing focus on Israel. "The obsession with Israel...is the largest threat to this council's credibility," said Barclay, a career diplomat. The council's annual rebuke of Israel has been a particular source of irritation for both Republican and Democratic U.S. administrations.

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