



## Middle East Spotlight

### Stopping Hate

Next April's U.N. Durban Review Conference (known as Durban II) is purportedly about combating racism. That was the very goal of the first such conference held in the South African city in 2001, which devolved into an orgy of vicious anti-Semitism. As preparations continue for Durban II, Western leaders are looking for ways to prevent a repeat performance of the first gathering. Should their efforts fail, the United States ought to lead a broad international campaign of ostracizing and delegitimizing the conference.

Durban I generated such intense levels of hate speech that the United States and Israel withdrew their delegations. The late Congressman and Holocaust survivor Tom Lantos said it was "the most sickening and unabashed display of hate for Jews I have seen since the Nazi period." Unless Western leaders step up efforts to combat the campaign to promote anti-Semitism under the banner of "anti-Zionism," the events of Durban I are likely to recur.

Case in point: The submission by the U.N.'s Asia Group for the conference's official declaration repeats the slander that Israel engages in "apartheid," "crimes against humanity" and "genocide" against the Palestinians. As the organization U.N. Watch points out, the submission's wording is "almost verbatim" that of the Asia Group's pre-Durban I draft. While singling out Israel, the text fails to mention any human rights violations committed by members of this regional group, such as Arab states or Iran.

The United States and its allies have led the efforts to prevent a replication of Durban I. Canada has said that it will boycott the conference; France has threatened to "disengage," while Britain is seeking to "avoid the disgraceful anti-Semitism that occurred" in Durban I.

In April, our U.N. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad pledged that America "will not participate unless it is proven that the conference will not be used as a platform for anti-Semitic behavior." Recently, the House of Representatives passed a resolution calling on the administration to "lead a high-level diplomatic effort" to defeat efforts to promote anti-Semitism at Durban II.

As part of this diplomatic effort, the United States must convince our allies to condition their own participation at Durban on removing hatred and bigotry from its agenda. In the coming months, America should use the preparatory process to halt the further demonization of Israel. Should these efforts fail, the only effective antidote to the Durban anti-Semitic poison would be wall-to-wall Western boycotts and denunciations.