

# Revealed: the anti-Israel network behind UN's Gaza investigation | The Jewish Chronicle

---

 The Jewish Chronicle

By Gerald Steinberg, March 13, 2015

The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is one of many organisations that use moral-sounding language as a façade for the opposite. Its officials and activities are controlled by regimes with abysmal human rights records - including Russia, China, and Middle Eastern dictatorships. It is not surprising that Israel is the main focus of "investigations" and condemnations.

Among its other faults, the UNHRC is very secretive - its reports are characterised by a lack of transparency, often written by unidentified persons with a worrying lack of political impartiality. For years, the secret authors of the 500-page document condemning Israel for "war crimes", published as the Goldstone Investigation in 2009, were hidden. (Judge Richard Goldstone showed little grasp of the content, and later acknowledged that the allegations were baseless.)

Recently, however, Hillel Neuer, the head of UN Watch, published the results of detailed research showing that it was Grietje Baars who assembled the text of the Goldstone report (primarily from questionable NGO claims). Ms Baars, who teaches human rights at City University in London, is a radical Marxist and an important figure in a network that seeks to exploit international law to target Israel.

Like others in this network, Ms Baars is closely linked to powerful anti-Israel NGOs, such as the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights and Swedish development charity Diakonia, helping them in campaigns to prosecute Israeli soldiers and officials.

In terms of legal ethics, the appropriate decision would be to disband the commission

Diakonia is mainly funded by the Swedish government (about £30m annually), implicating them in this moral corruption. The charity submitted a lengthy "report" to the Goldstone Commission, thereby suggesting that the appointment of Ms Baars gave rise to a conflict of interest.

This sordid history is very relevant to the UNHRC's latest "investigation" of Israel, which was led by William Schabas (another international law professor in the network), until he was forced to resign after omitting his work for the PLO on a UN job application.

The job of assembling the evidence and text under Mr Schabas was again done by a mysterious coterie of officials in Geneva, and has now been inherited by former US judge Mary McGowan Davis, who heads what is left of the Schabas commission.

Unlike Mr Schabas, Ms Baars and Diakonia, Ms McGowan Davis is not involved in any radical network that exploits international legal slogans. But she has, as far as I am aware, failed to distance herself from them. She agreed to be Mr Schabas's deputy and accepted the biased mandate and top-secret nature of this latest version of the Goldstone lawfare process.

Even though Ms McGowan Davis this week asked the UNHRC for an extra three months in which to prepare what will always be known as the Schabas report, it will be stained with its immoral foundation and secretive processes.

In terms of legal ethics, the appropriate decision would be to disband the commission and expose the farcical activities of the UNHRC. In addition, restoring transparency means full disclosure of the staff

If she does this, Ms McGowan Davis will be honoured for restoring the moral foundations of international law.

*Gerald Steinberg is president of NGO Monitor and Professor of Political Science, Bar Ilan University*

