

Building a Pretext to Wage War on Syria: NATO's "Humanitarian Watchdog"

The Pro-Israel NGO behind War on Libya is targeting Syria

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Who will watch the watchdog?

On December 2, the Geneva-based UN Watch [welcomed](#) that day's "[strong condemnation](#)" of Syria by a UN Human Rights Council emergency session, and its establishment of a special rapporteur to monitor the situation therefollowing what it called "[a global campaign](#) to create the post by a coalition of prominent democracy dissidents and human rights groups" led by UN Watch itself. The non-governmental organization, whose [self-appointed mandate](#) is "to monitor the performance of the United Nations by the yardstick of its own Charter," expressed regret, however, that the UNHRC resolution "paid special deference" to Syria's "territorial integrity" and "political independence," decrying the provision as "a clear jab at NATO's intervention in Libya, and a pre-emptive strike against the principle of the international community's responsibility to protect civilians under assault."

On the same day, UN Watch delivered a [speech](#) to the Human Rights Council plenary session in which it denounced the UN Security Council's "shocking silence on Syria's atrocities," calling on it to take "urgent action to protect the civilian population before thousands more are beaten, tortured and killed." It also urged UNESCO to reverse its [recent decision](#) to elect Syria to two human rights committees. Submitting that day's UNHRC resolution to UNESCO's [Executive Board](#), the NGO demanded that they "expel the Assad government from those panels immediately." The statement went on to berate the UNHRC for its "longtime policy, and that of the old Commission, of turning a blind eye to Syria's gross and systematic violations." Also "wrong and harmful," in UN Watch's view, was the UN body's "policy of supporting Syria's cynical and transparent ploy each year to condemn Israel for alleged violations of human rights, which should not be repeated this March."

For those familiar with the NGO's [unmistakable governmental ties](#), it will come as no surprise that UN Watch could downplay Israel's extensively documented human rights abuses as "alleged" while at the same time confidently asserting that "the facts are clear" regarding Syria's "gross and systematic violations of human rights." As Ian Williams, a former president of the United Nations Correspondents Association, wrote in a 2007 *Guardian* [opinion piece](#), "UN Watch is an organization whose main purpose is to attack the United Nations in general, and its human rights council in particular, for alleged bias against Israel."

Founded in 1993 under the chairmanship of Ambassador [Morris B. Abram](#), the former US permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva, UN Watch is affiliated with the American Jewish Committee. Described by one [expert on US-Israeli relations](#) as “the foreign policy arm of the Israel lobby,” the AJC also takes a keen interest in the UN’s alleged bias against Israel. According to a 2003 [article](#) in the *Jewish Daily Forward*, a “sustained effort” by the lobby’s foreign policy arm resulted in the United States “embarking on the most comprehensive campaign in years to reduce the number of anti-Israel resolutions routinely passed by the United Nations General Assembly.”

In February, UN Watch [organized 70 “rights groups”](#) to send a [letter](#) to President Obama, EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, and UN Secretary-General Ban-ki Moon demanding international action against Libya by invoking the “[Responsibility to Protect](#)” doctrine. Speaking to the [Jerusalem Post](#) at the time, the NGO’s executive director, [Hillel Neuer](#), said that “the muted response of the US and the EU to the Libyan atrocities is not only a let-down to the many Libyans risking their lives for freedom, but a shirking of their obligations, as members of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, to protect peace and human rights and to prevent war crimes.” Despite the [unsubstantiated](#) nature of its allegations, “UN Watch’s “[Urgent Appeal to Stop Atrocities in Libya](#)” [proved sufficient](#) to get Libya suspended from the Human Rights Council before being referred to the Security Council, and ultimately provided the spurious justification for NATO’s eight-month “[humanitarian](#)” bombing of the country.

Undoubtedly the most significant [signatory](#) of the UN Watch-sponsored letter **was [Carl Gershman](#), president of the [National Endowment for Democracy](#). **Funded by American taxpayers but outside Congressional oversight, the Endowment has been [meddling in other countries’ internal politics since its inception in 1983](#). As [Allen Weinstein](#), NED’s architect and first acting president, famously told the *Washington Post* in 1991, “a lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA.”****

A lot of what NED does today can also be understood by observing its longtime president’s career path. A former head of the neo-Trotskyite [Social Democrats-USA](#) who [steadily evolved](#) into neoconservatives, Gershman **is no stranger to the [pro-Israel lobbying](#), having worked in the [research department](#) of the Anti-Defamation League in 1968 and served on the governing council of the American Jewish Committee in the early 1970s.**

Although the UN Watch [purports](#) to believe in the United Nations’ mission to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,” the pro-Israel NGO bears significant responsibility for inducing a [devastating war](#) on the current generation in one Arab country already this year and is clearly determined to [repeat the carnage](#) in another. As long as UN Watch’s motto of “Monitoring the United Nations, Promoting Human Rights” continues to obscure its real mission of “Manipulating the United Nations, Promoting Israel’s Interests,” the [warning of a Roman poet](#) becomes increasingly pertinent: “*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*”

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