

Should One Stand Up for Western Values?

By [Kim Petersen](#)

Theme: [United Nations](#)

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What are western values? One often hears a representative of a western country praising its western values. In a [2017 statement](#) Canada’s prime minister Justin Trudeau adumbrated Canadian values as “openness, compassion, equality, and inclusion.”

Given the psychological torture that Julian Assange has been subjected to over the years at the hands of western nations like the Britain, the United States, Sweden, and the silent host of western states and their media, one wonders where the compassion is. At the heart of the case against Assange is an antipathy to openness, as evidenced by the vituperation directed at Assange for publishing the truth; WikiLeaks has a perfect record of publication. And by promoting the right to know, Assange sought to include the public.

Given the historical trajectory of the West, how might purportedly virtuous western values have arisen? Enlightened Europeans set sail for distant shores, claimed the inhabited lands as their own, derided the locals as savages, enslaved them, raped the women, chopped off body parts, spread disease, murdered multitudes, robbed the resources, destroyed the cultures, among a host of atrocities. Despotism, monarchy, Nazism, fascism, and capitalism would be spawned by Europeans.

Are westerners more enlightened today?

The United Nations General Assembly 72nd session in December 2017, seems an apt barometer of current western values. The UNGA’s resolution 72/157, called for concrete action for the total elimination of racism globally.

The resolution was resumed as [75/237](#), still entitled as “A global call for concrete action for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.” It was adopted by the General Assembly on 31 December 2020.

Of the total votes cast, 106 were in favor, 14 were against, and there were 44 abstentions.

The [votes on Resolution 75/237](#) are very revealing of western values. Consider that among the 14 nay votes were a bevy of western countries:

- Australia
- Canada
- Czech Republic
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- France
- Germany
- Guyana
- Israel
- Nauru
- Marshall Islands
- Netherlands
- Slovenia
- United Kingdom
- United States

The US explained its nay vote as being based on the “[unfair and unacceptable singling out of Israel](#).”

In his book, *Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*, professor Noam Chomsky made crystal clear the Israeli racism toward Arabs: “Contempt for the Arab population is deeply rooted in Zionist thought.” Chomsky also alluded to western permissiveness toward Israeli racism: “Anti-Arab racism is ... so widespread as to be unnoticeable; it is perhaps the only remaining form of racism to be regarded as legitimate.” [1]

The US is a country established through [genocide and dispossession of the Indigenous peoples](#), and it set up an apartheid reservation system for those Indigenous peoples that survived. From this vantage point, it seems no wonder that Israel escaped criticism by the US since the US lacks a moral basis from which to castigate Israel. The same holds [true for Canada](#), a country that still practices apartheid with its Indian Act and reserve system. Canada also steadfastly [supports Israeli apartheid](#).

Several other western or western-aligned countries abstained, among them: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea (South), Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Ukraine. These countries refused to take a stand on the anti-racism resolution.

What about the other countries that supported the resolution? In particular, how did the countries subjected to disinformation, persistent criticism, sanctions, and provocative military maneuvers from countries crowing and preening about their western values vote? China, Cuba, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North), Iran, Iraq, Russia, and Syria all voted in favor of the anti-racism resolution.

Which countries’ values best represent those embraced by people of conscience?

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Notes

1. Colleague B.J. Sabri and I explored in a 12-part series what Israeli racism is: "Defining Israeli Zionist Racism," *Dissident Voice*, read parts [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), and [12](#).

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