

Rothman Encourages Stronger Role for Hadassah at United Nations

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Defends Humanitarian Organization From Attacks

Washington, DC -- Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) is urging the U.S. to intensify its efforts to help Hadassah secure a stronger role at the United Nations (UN). In a letter sent on January 9, Rothman requested that U.S. Ambassador to the UN Richard Holbrooke put his full support behind Hadassah's application for "Consultative Status," which is being opposed by anti-Israel forces at the international body. A decision on Hadassah's application is expected to be made by the end of the month.

If granted Consultative Status at the UN, Hadassah's representatives would be permitted to sit as observers at public meetings of the UN Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) and its subsidiary bodies and commissions, and submit written or oral statements, or proposals, relevant to the work of the body.

"I am outraged that Hadassah's humanitarian mission has come under a full assault by anti-Israel forces at the UN," Rothman said. "I am equally disturbed that some UN member states have used Hadassah's Zionist credentials to unearth the repugnant claim that Zionism equals racism and in so doing, to object to the application."

"Clearly, Hadassah's decades-long dedication to humanitarian projects in Israel and around the world entitles it to be fairly considered for Consultative Status at the UN. I hope, for the sake of the UN's reputation, that the effort to reject Hadassah's application is defeated by fair-minded UN member states," concluded Rothman.

Presently, thousands of non-governmental organizations around the world enjoy the benefits of having Consultative Status at the UN. The Consultative Status category at the UN was created as a result of the UN Charter (Article 71), which was adopted in 1945, to help take into account the full diversity of the non-governmental organizations at the national, regional and international levels. The status also acknowledges the breadth of non-governmental organizations' expertise and the capacity of non-governmental organizations to support the work of the United Nations. The following are examples of groups with Consultative Status: America Bar Association, Freedom House, Humane Society, Human Rights Watch, National Council of Negro Women, League of Women Voters, and Sierra Club.

Rothman, a three-term Congressman, serves on the influential House International Relations Committee.

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