

Hoax Resolution Hints at What the U.N. Could Look Like If It Lived Up to Its Own Charter

 cnsnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/hoax-resolution-hints-what-un-could-look-if-it-lived-its-own-charter

3/13/2017

Flags of member nations flying at United Nations headquarters in New York City. (UN Photo)

(CNSNews.com) – A draft U.N. General Assembly “resolution” circulating on social media at the weekend called for some of the world’s most severe human rights abusers to be removed from top U.N. agencies such as the U.N. Human Rights Council.



It was a hoax, however – something signaled by the anomalous reference at the end to the Jewish holiday of Purim. Celebrated this year from sundown on Saturday to sunset on Sunday, the cheerful holiday is sometimes marked by April Fool’s Day-type pranks.

A number of Twitter users fell for it, expressing hope that the General Assembly would indeed vote in favor of the measure.

One wondered whether the move could be “a reaction to [fear of funding cuts](#).”

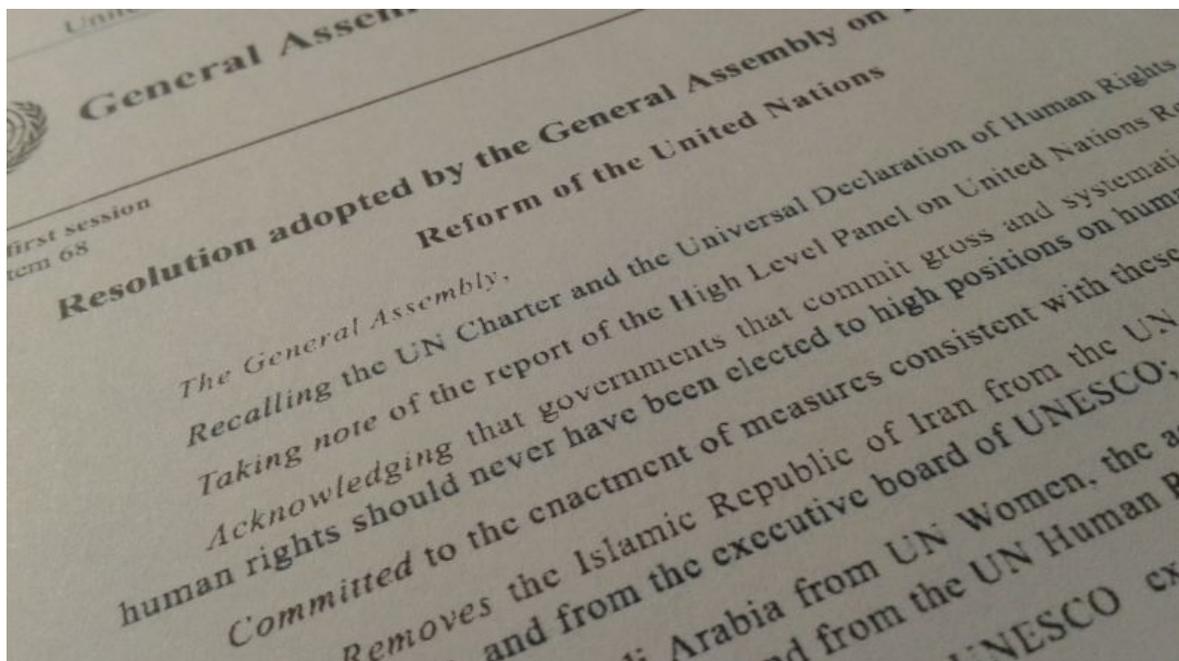
Others asked, apparently seriously, “Who is presenting the resolution?” “Is that genuine?” “Is this real? If so & real it’s an incredible leap towards sanity for the U.N.”

“This would be revolutionary,” tweeted one user, while another posted, “That might be the most extraordinary document I’ve seen come out of the U.N. Hope it’s adopted.”

It was left to Hillel Neuer, executive director of the Geneva-based non-governmental organization U.N. Watch, to explain: “As this document says at the end, today is the Jewish upside-down holiday of Purim, whose customs include April Fool’s Day stories ...”

The original tweet posted by Neuer read, “If this resolution is adopted tomorrow, it will be extraordinary – and a real sign that new U.N. chief António Guterres is serious about reform.”

Below was posted what looked like a genuine General Assembly resolution (complete with QR code and a “Please recycle” message), under agenda item 68, which deals with “promotion and protection of human rights.”



It started with a preamble recalling the U.N. Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights and invoking a major 2004 report on U.N. reform, before “acknowledging that governments that commit gross and systematic abuses of human rights should never have been elected to high positions on human rights.”

Then followed ten operative clauses. Among them, the measure purported to:

-- Remove Iran from the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the executive board of the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Iran has had a seat on the CSW, a body dealing with gender equality and the advancement of women, since 2011 and is a member of UNESCO’s board from 2015-19.

(When Iran was re-elected onto CSW for a second four-year in 2014 the Obama administration [did not object](#) when it had the opportunity to do so – but then voiced “outrage” afterwards.)

-- Remove Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Venezuela and China from the HRC. One in four of the Geneva-based council’s members this year are [governments with poor records on human rights](#) and political freedom.

-- Remove Saudi Arabia, Cuba and Venezuela from additional leadership posts they hold in the U.N. system – respectively as members of U.N. Women; the [controversial](#) U.N. committee responsible for non-governmental organization accreditation; and the executive board of the U.N. Development Program.

-- Remove Syria’s Assad regime from the post of rapporteur of the U.N. General Assembly’s decolonization committee, which the text notes “is charged with ending the subjugation of people.”

-- Remove [Sudan from UNESCO’s executive board](#) and UNESCO’s human rights committee.

-- Remove left-wing Swiss sociologist Jean Ziegler from the HRC advisory committee. Ziegler, who has [a long record of sympathizing with despotic regimes](#) and criticizing the U.S. and Israel, has been an elected member of the influential committee since 2008. He is due to be [honored at an event in Geneva](#) this week, with a senior member of the U.N. human rights commissioner Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein’s office participating.

The draft “resolution” ends with two clauses:

-- “Regrets that the above were ever elected, in violation of U.N. principles”

-- “Takes note that today is the Jewish holiday of Purim, and extends best wishes to all.”

Apart from that reference to Purim, another clue that the document is a prank is the formula used to number the resolution: *A/RES/14/5777*

A genuine resolution would be numbered, for example: *A/RES/71/275*, with 71 referring to the 71st (2016-17) session of the General Assembly and 275 being the resolution's identifier.

Purim this year fell on 14 Adar, in the Jewish year 5777.

[Ad Feedback](#)