Response To Common Inaccuracy: Zionism is Racism

Inaccuracy: Zionism is a racist ideology.

Response

Zionism is the Jewish national movement of rebirth and renewal in the land of Israel — the historical birthplace of the Jewish people. Rooted in the liberal principles of freedom, democracy, equality, and social justice, Zionism is fundamentally incompatible with racism.

The yearning to return to Zion, the biblical term for both the Land of Israel and Jerusalem, has been the cornerstone of Jewish religious life since the Jewish exile from the land two thousand years ago, and is embedded in Jewish prayer, ritual, literature and culture. Zionism is an ideology that celebrates the Jewish national connection to Israel. It does not discriminate against or judge other religions or nationalities.

The false and biased charge of racism is a deliberate effort to delegitimize the right of Jews to a national homeland and undermine the Jewish nationalist movement.

Israel's Law of Return, which some critics of Israel accuse of being “racist,” is for Jews a potent testimonial to the safe and free haven they will always have in the State of Israel after centuries of persecution and isolation. Israel's uniqueness as a country which grants automatic citizenship to Jews (as well as their non-Jewish
immediate family members) who seek to settle there is not racist. Individuals ineligible for automatic citizenship under the Law of Return are eligible for Israeli citizenship under regular procedures equivalent to such requirements in other countries. Indeed, the State of Israel is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, comprised of Jews and non-Jews from at least 100 different countries from diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

The equation of “Zionism equals racism” has its origins in the passage of the Arab and Soviet-sponsored United Nations resolution of November 10, 1975 which declared Zionism a “form of racism and racial discrimination.” The highly politicized resolution was aimed at denying Israel its political legitimacy by attacking its moral basis for existence. The resolution, which former-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan described as a “low point” in the history of the UN, was finally repealed on December 16, 1991.