

## Online death threats for UN Israel critic

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UN General Assembly chief, Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann who had the Israeli mistreatment of Palestinians critical, has get online death threats

He added that threats against him have been posted within the past week. He did not disclose on which website the threats were posted or reveal the nature of the threats -- currently under investigation by UN security officials.

"Very serious threats have appeared on the Internet against the life of the president of the UN General Assembly. This matter is being looked into by the pertinent authorities," a statement released by his spokesman, Enrique Yeves, reads.

D'Escoto, a Roman Catholic priest and former Nicaraguan foreign minister, is an outspoken critic of Israeli crimes against the Palestinians and US support for Tel Aviv.

Israel placed the Palestinians -- the indigenous population of the land -- residing in the Gaza Strip under a blockade after the democratically-elected Palestinian government of Hamas took control of the coastal area in mid-June 2007.

The Israeli siege has inflicted a humanitarian crisis in the already impoverished Strip, turning it into an 'open prison' and putting the lives of its nearly 1.5 million residents at stake.

The UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday declared Israeli policies against the Palestinians and the blockade of the Gaza Strip to be "crime(s) against humanity."

Several UN Security Council resolutions condemning Israeli actions against Palestinians have been defied by Israel. The US, Israel's number one ally, has also exercised its veto powers to prevent the adoption of 42 anti-Israeli resolutions sought by the council since 1972.

Since 2004, Washington has vetoed three resolutions which called for Tel Aviv to halt its operations in the Gaza Strip - which had been occupied by Israeli forces from 1967 to 1994.

The statement released by the office of the UN General Assembly president touches upon the issue of Tel Aviv, slamming Israeli press reports that d'Escoto tried to bar Israeli UN ambassador Gabriela Shalev from speaking at a plenary session last week.

Asked to comment on d'Escoto's remarks, Mirit Cohen, the spokesperson for the Israeli mission to the UN said in a statement, "The role of the president of the UN General Assembly should be to unite the international community and promote shared interests and values."

"However, since his first days as president of the General Assembly, Mr. d'Escoto has been divisive and controversial, abusing his position," she claimed.

D'Escoto also condemned the arbitrary detention and expulsion of Richard Falk by Israel, the special UN human rights investigator in the Palestinian territories.

Israeli authorities on Monday said Falk was unwelcome because of what Tel Aviv has regarded as the hostile position he had taken toward Israel.

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