



## **Statement from Paul Charney, Chair of the Zionist Federation of UK and Ireland**

**27.04.2021**

Human Rights Watch's (HRW) publication, "A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution", issued today, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021, is simply the Israel-obsessed NGO's latest in a long history of attacks on Jews, Jewish self-determination and Israel, regardless of policies or borders.

Indeed, Robert Bernstein, the founder of HRW, felt compelled to write, in 2009, in the New York Times, how HRW "has been issuing reports on the Israeli-Arab conflict that are helping those who wish to turn Israel into a pariah state."

Much like other publications by HRW and other anti-Israel NGOs, this latest one whitewashes, distorts and omits facts and context, whilst repeatedly denouncing what they term Israel's "racist" demographic "policies" and "goals". The report specifically targets Israel's 1950 Law of Return which was enacted in the shadow of the Holocaust, to provide a safe haven for Jews who for centuries suffered persecution around the world.

However, HRW omit such facts seemingly in order to demonise Israel and portray it as somehow "racist". There is absolutely nothing in the Law of Return which discriminates against non-Jewish Israeli citizens and it is certainly not unique; other countries, such as Ireland, Spain and Germany, have legislation to simplify emigration for their respective diaspora populations.

It is worth noting too that Israel's Law of Return is consistent with the standards of the UN's International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), which mandates "special measures" for the "advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups" to protect the "fundamental freedoms."

Furthermore, and bearing in mind the very real and ongoing threats from Hamas and other terrorist factions in Gaza, as well as Hezbollah and Iran, HRW are, by dismissing Israel's security concerns and associated preventative measures, only laying bare its sheer contempt for the Jewish state and its people, all its people.

As the ZF, and many others, have said on numerous occasions, the use of the "apartheid" canard against Israel is a particularly cynical and malicious exploitation of the very real suffering of the Black South Africans under the former apartheid regime.

In a country where Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, Baha'i and other ethnic and religious minorities coexist and thrive at all levels of Israeli society, with equal rights under the law, by so relentlessly pushing this malicious smear and targeting Israel whilst ignoring very real human rights violations, HRW have once again shown that its very name is a gross misnomer.