

Israel Lawyer Appointed Chair of UN Human Rights Committee

By [Middle East Monitor](#)

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Featured image: Yuval Shany, deputy president of the Israel Democracy Institute and a member of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Faculty of Law [Twitter]

An Israeli lawyer was chosen yesterday to chair the UN Human Rights Committee, despite the country's dire human rights record.

The UN Human Rights Committee, not to be confused with the UN Human Rights Council, is a panel of legal professionals which reviews states' adherence to the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR), which forms part of the International Bill of Human Rights.

The Covenant commits parties to respect the civil and political rights of individuals, including the right to life, freedom of religion, speech and assembly, electoral rights and rights to due process and a fair trial. Israel has signed and ratified the Covenant.

The committee will now be chaired by Yuval Shany, who was unanimously selected on Monday by its 18 members. Shany is deputy president of the Israel Democracy Institute and a member of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Faculty of Law. He has also [worked](#) for Israel's Ministry of Justice and as an advisor to the Israeli Prime Minister's Office and the Israeli army. He will be the first Israeli to chair the Human Rights Committee.

In a statement following his appointment, Shany said that

"we live in an international climate that no longer supports human rights. As head of the committee, I hope to harness its positive and apolitical influence to secure human rights for all citizens of the world," according to [Haaretz](#).

The appointment will raise eyebrows in light of Israel's dire human rights record and systematic denial of Palestinians' human rights. According to Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem, Israel [uses](#) administrative detention of Palestinians, in which a person who has not committed an offense is held without trial or legal proceedings, as a "quick and easy alternative to criminal trial". B'Tselem [statistics](#) show that "at the end of May 2018, 440 Palestinians - including two women and three minors - were held in administrative detention in Israel Prison Service (IPS) facilities."

Israel's disregard for human rights has also been highlighted during the [Great March of Return](#), which began on 30 March. Since the protests began, [135 Palestinians have died](#)

after being hit by Israeli live fire, with a further 15,000 injured. Israel has also been criticised for its targeting of [journalists](#), [photographers](#) and [paramedics](#) in a bid to silence reports and images of its human rights violations.

In addition, Israel in June [passed](#) a law making it an offence to film Israeli soldiers on duty, making filming “with intent to harm the morale of Israel’s soldiers or its inhabitants” punishable by up to five years in prison. The law will limit the work of human rights groups who document human rights violations committed by Israeli soldiers in the occupied West Bank.

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