

Why did Israel fail to back US-supported UN resolution on Crimea?

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[Electronic Intifada](#)

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The United States often stands virtually alone, save for the company of its colonies like Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, as well as other settler-colonial states like Canada, in opposing UN resolutions critical of Israel. Israel did not return the favor today by backing a resolution the US feels very strongly about.

The UN General Assembly passed [resolution A/68/L.39](#) condemning Russia's annexation of Crimea.

[on Twitter](#)

UN Gen.Assembly Resolution defending [#Ukraine](#)'s territorial integrity adopted. 100 for, 11 against, 58 abstentions pic.twitter.com/XqqBu5oslY

— Melissa Kent (@KentUNCBC) [March 27, 2014](#)

As the [final tally](#) shows, 100 countries voted in favor, 11 against and 58 abstained on the resolution, which was sponsored by Canada, Costa Rica, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine.

The United States, predictably, voted in favor, Russia against, and China abstained.

But Israel was a no-show, not voting at all. Perhaps it was because [Israeli diplomats are on strike](#).

That would be a convenient excuse. But surely even the Israeli diplomats' union would make an exception for a vote that Israel's strongest backer - the Obama administration - feels is absolutely critical, as these fervent tweets by US ambassador [Samantha Power](#) indicate:

[on Twitter](#)

Today's UN resolution made it clear: the world won't accept [#Russia](#)'s illegal annexation of [#Crimea](#). [#UnitedforUkraine](#)

— Samantha Power (@AmbassadorPower) [March 27, 2014](#)

[on Twitter](#)

[#Russia](#)'s actions endanger not just the people of [#Ukraine](#), but the international system as a whole. The U.S. stands [#UnitedforUkraine](#).

Uncomfortable precedent

Perhaps Israel was disturbed by the language of today's resolution, which "Calls upon all States, international organizations and specialized agencies not to recognize any alteration of the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol" and to "refrain from any action or dealing that might be interpreted as recognizing any such altered status."

Israel, of course, remains in flagrant violation of dozens of similarly worded UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions including [Security Council Resolution 465 of 1980](#), deeming Israel's annexation of Jerusalem and its settlements on occupied land to be illegal.

That resolution declared that "all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity and that Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War."

It also called "upon all States not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connexion with settlements in the occupied territories."

Israel lying low

Today's no-show at the UN is only the latest instance of Israel, a serial annexer of other countries' lands, trying to evade having to give a position on Crimea.

Earlier this month, a Jewish-Ukrainian MP expressed frustration at Israel's "silence on Crimea."

The MP, Oleksandr Feldman, said he was disappointed at what [The Times of Israel termed](#) "a rather toothless statement the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem released reportedly after American pressure."

Israel expressed "great concern" and urged "diplomacy" but said absolutely nothing supporting the Obama administration's strident denunciations of Russia's move.

Israel, apparently, has a enough of a sense of irony not to condemn Russia - and perhaps set a precedent for itself.

The US, by contrast, continues to shamelessly impose sanctions and issue threats regarding Russia's absorption of Crimea, while at the same time financing and shielding Israel's continued annexation, occupation and colonization of Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian land.

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