

The Honorable Amb. Samantha Power
U.S. Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017
USA

5 May 2014

Dear Ambassador Power,

UN Watch is deeply concerned over the proposed UN Human Rights Council appointment, scheduled for this Thursday, 8 May 2014, of Ms. Hilal Elver as the new Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. For the reasons set forth below, UN Watch urges the United States to oppose her candidacy, which we believe will harm the cause of human rights, damage the reputation of the United Nations, and undermine the interests of the United States.

As you know, the Right to Food mandate was conceived by Cuba in 2000 to be used as a political weapon against the U.S. and West, which is exactly what the first mandate-holder— Jean Ziegler, co-founder of the Muammar Gaddafi Human Rights Prize—did for eight years. A review of Ms. Elver’s record suggests that she would follow this politicized and prejudiced path.

Under Article 39 of the Annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1, the criteria for mandate-holders include: (a) expertise; (b) experience in the field of the mandate; (c) independence; (d) impartiality; (e) personal integrity; and (f) objectivity.

Ms. Elver clearly fails to meet these criteria. We note the following:

- **Elver Fails Impartiality Test:** Ms. Elver fails the objectivity and impartiality test. She devotes much of her writing to condemning America and the West. A former adviser to the Office of the Turkish Prime Minister, she has praised Erdogan as “imaginative” and “brave”; celebrated his “religious devotion” and “generosity to others less fortunate”; and saluted him for taking “the high road of moderation and humility.” By contrast, she justified Turkey declining the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice by citing “the influence of the strong Greek lobby in international forums.” (Elver, “Reluctant Partners: Turkey and the European Union,” *Middle East Report*, Vol. 235, Summer 2005.)
- **Elver’s Academic Work Cites 9/11 Truthers’ Bible:** Together with her husband and co-author Richard Falk, Elver is explicitly acknowledged in the world’s leading 9/11 conspiracy book, “The New Pearl Harbor,” for the help she provided the author, David Ray Griffin. Elver’s own academic work cites to Griffin’s conspiracy book, which argues that the Bush Administration helped orchestrate the attacks on the World Trade Center to justify wars

against Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan. In a 2012 law journal article, Elver explicitly cited to Griffin's notorious conspiracy tract. She compared 9/11 to Pearl Harbor, saying that both incidents "gave permission to the government to unleash the war power," "invade countries", "create new hegemonies", and "racially discriminate against and segregate the people inside the United States." (See H. Elver, "Racializing Islam Before and After 9/11," *Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems*, Vol. 21 at 119, Spring 2012.)

- **Elver Accuses U.S. of "Hostility Toward Islam":** According to Ms. Elver, the "American establishment"—she singles out the media and Hollywood—is guilty of "hostility towards Islam." (*Ibid.*)
- **Appointment of Richard Falk's Co-Author Sends Wrong Message:** Ms. Elver is not only the wife of discredited UN official Richard Falk, she is also his co-author on many articles and books. They travel, work, write, lecture and attend conferences together. She is not only his "constant companion," says Falk, but also his "deepest collaborator." Appointing Elver will in some ways be like appointing Falk, and will send a terrible message: the day that Falk finally leaves the UN, he will walk back in through another door. Symbolism matters.
- **Elver's Work is Sloppy and Tendentious:** Elver's work is infused with dogmatism and tendentiousness, and with sloppy attention to facts. In June 2011, for example, after the Economist advised Turkish voters to vote against the party of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Elver and Falk published an article on the Al Jazeera website accusing the British magazine of a "Eurocentric virus," because it "never did venture such an opinion on the eve of the election of such reactionary and militarist figures as George W. Bush, Stephen Harper, or Binyamin Netanyahu." The magazine, they wrote, revealed "a mentality that has not shaken itself free from the paternalism and entitlements of the bygone colonialist days." In fact, however, the Economist indeed had advised American, Canadian and Israeli citizens how to cast their votes. "Don't professors do any homework nowadays?" asked the magazine in response.
- **Elver's Election is Illegal for Stated Conflict of Interest:** In her application form, asked if she satisfied the position's mandatory conflict-of-interest rules, she stated "No." Elver is the only one of ten applicants who declared non-compliance with Questions 4-5 under Section VII of the application. No correction of her form has been reported. If her self-disqualifying answers to these two questions were erroneous, this would only underscore the unprofessionalism of her application, which is replete with spelling mistakes and non-sequiturs.
- **Like Falk, Elver Accuses Israel of "Water Apartheid" and "Genocide":** As UN food expert, we can guess what her first charge will be. At a December conference in Qatar, she gave a lecture on Israel entitled "Water Apartheid."

There is every indication that Elver would, like Ziegler, twist the hunger post to go after Israel. In 2007, Elver accused the Jewish state of “genocide” and compared Israelis to “Nazis.”

- **Elver Says “Jewish Lobby Manipulates American Politics”:** Like Erdogan, Elver is obsessed with what she calls in her Turkish articles “*Yahudi lobisini*” (“the Jewish lobby”). On the 10th anniversary of 9/11, Elver wrote that “the Jewish lobby” is “manipulating American politics” to ensure unlimited support for Israel. In 2012, she warned about “the strong Zionist lobby” in the United States. Indeed, “many Muslim organizations are being controlled” in the American political arena by “pro-Israel lobbyist groups.” (See links to all sources in UN Watch Briefing No. 440, at www.unwatch.org)

For all of these reasons, UN Watch urges the United States, as a leading member of the Human Rights Council, to uphold its own rules and founding principles by opposing the unfit candidacy of Ms. Elver.

Sincerely,



Hillel C. Neuer
Executive Director