Move to bring genocide case against Ahmadinejad as Iran president repeats call to wipe out Israel

Robert Tait in Tehran, Ed Pilkington in New York
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The outgoing US ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton, is backing a call for the president of Iran to be charged with inciting genocide because of his speeches advocating the destruction of the state of Israel.

Barely a week after he announced his resignation from the UN post, Mr Bolton will appear tomorrow among a panel of diplomats and lawyers calling for Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to be prosecuted. The panel has been convened by a Jewish umbrella group in the US, the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organisations.

Mr Bolton was forced to quit his post after his appointment was blocked by Democrats and several Republicans in the Senate foreign relations committee. President George Bush said he accepted the resignation but was unhappy about it.

The call for legal action came as Mr Ahmadinejad repeated his onslaught against Israel at an international gathering of holocaust deniers in Tehran. The president, who has dismissed the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis as a myth told up to 70 visiting speakers that the Israeli state would soon be wiped out.

"Thanks to people's wishes and God's will, the trend for the existence of the Zionist regime is downwards and this is what God has promised and what all nations want," he said. He was praised by several participants for his "bravery and democratic actions" a source who was present told the Guardian.

The event came under fierce attack abroad. At his monthly Downing Street press conference, Tony Blair condemned the conference as "shocking beyond belief" and singled out the decision to invite David Duke, a former leading Ku Klux Klan member, as proof of Iran's extremism. Meeting Israel's prime minister, Ehud Olmert, in Berlin, the chancellor, Angela Merkel, said Germany rejected the conference and would "act against it with all the means that we have". Franco Frattini, the EU's justice commissioner, denounced it as "an affront to the whole democratic world".

By contrast, Mr Duke praised the event as "a tremendous step forward" and said Mr Ahmadinejad said "sensible things".

Mr Bolton will be joined in tomorrow's launch of the legal action against Mr Ahmadinejad by a Harvard law professor, Alan Dershowitz, and the former Israeli ambassador to the UN, Dore Gold, together with experts from the US, Canada and Israel. A suit will be lodged with the international court of justice at The Hague, which will decide whether to hear the action. The

panel said the Iranian president was guilty of inciting genocide "by making numerous threats against the United States, calling for the destruction of Israel and instigating discrimination against Christians and Jews". His words violate a 1948 UN genocide convention, to which Iran is a signatory, they said.

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