**UNESCO chief ‘received death threats’ for opposing Jerusalem motion**

October 17, 2016

By AFP and Times of Israel Staff

Times of Israel

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/unesco-chief-received-death-threats-for-opposing-jerusalem-motion/>

UNESCO chief Irina Bokova has received “death threats” after expressing reservations about an Arab-backed resolution denying Israel’s history in Jerusalem, Israel’s ambassador to the UN agency said on Monday.

“The director general has received death threats and her protection has had to be reinforced,” Carmel Shama HaCohen said on Israel Radio.

“These threats were made after her criticism” of two resolutions adopted last week at committee stage ahead of a final vote, HaCohen said, accusing Arab countries of “appalling conduct” over the drafts.

The claim was not confirmed by UN officials.

Bokova distanced herself from the resolutions in a statement, saying “nowhere more than in Jerusalem do Jewish, Christian and Muslim heritage and traditions share space.”

The motion, which passed last week in Paris the committee stage, is waiting for validation by UNESCO’s Executive Board on Tuesday.

Earlier Monday it was reported that an Israeli effort to delay the ratification of the resolution was thwarted by Arab nations in the UN’s cultural agency.

Channel 10 News reported that HaCohen attempted to lobby for a delay of the decision, after convincing two friendly countries with representation on the board to request a stay in light of the controversy it has caused.

Board chairman Michael Worbs of Germany, who has himself [expressed opposition](http://www.timesofisrael.com/top-unesco-official-to-israeli-tv-id-never-deny-jewish-ties-to-jerusalem/) to the document’s wording, would then have rescheduled the ratification for a later date, allowing for renewed debate and possible changes in the wording of the resolution.

But having caught wind of the maneuver, a group of Arab nations which backed the motion reportedly put heavy pressure on Worbs, who then announced he would suspend himself from chairing the meeting.

Worbs will be replaced by Swedish ambassador Annika Markovic, who is not expected to support a postponement.

Mexico’s ambassador to UNESCO Andres Roemer [walked out of the vote in Paris](http://www.timesofisrael.com/dont-quit-over-jerusalem-vote-israel-tells-mexicos-jewish-unesco-envoy/) in what appears to have been a personal protest against his country’s decision to vote in favor of the text. The ambassador, who is Jewish, then apparently contemplated resigning his post, but was urged not to by HaCohen, who wrote him a personal letter praising him as a friend of the Jewish state.

Twenty-four countries voted in favor of the resolution. Six nations (including the US, Germany and Britain) voted against and another 26 abstained.

Israel informed Bokova on Friday that it was suspending its cooperation with UNESCO over the vote, with Education Minister Naftali Bennett calling the motion a denial of history that “gives a boost to terrorism.”