# PA accuses Nikki Haley of racism, being ‘anti-Palestinian’

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http://www.timesofisrael.com/pa-accuses-nikki-haley-of-racism-being-anti-palestinian/

The Palestinian Authority’s foreign ministry on Tuesday went on the offensive against the American ambassador to the United Nations ahead of a UNESCO vote this week on declaring the Old City of Hebron a “world heritage site in danger.”

Nikki Haley has urged UN leaders to oppose the measure, which would label the Tomb of Patriarchs in Hebron as a Palestinian world heritage site.

In a letter addressed Friday to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, she wrote, “The Tomb of the Patriarchs, which is sacred to three faiths, is in no immediate threat. Such a designation risks undermining the seriousness such an assessment by UNESCO should have.”

In its statement, the PA charged, “This is not the first message in which the American ambassador has expressed her hidden malice and hatred toward the Palestinians.”

“After she prevented the appointment of Dr. Salam Fayyad as the UN envoy in Libya, she recently affirmed that she would prevent the appointment of any Palestinian in the United Nations and its institutions, confirming her racist and anti-Palestinian position, and its clear hostility to Palestine.”

The PA statement criticized “the crude intervention of the US ambassador in the work of UNESCO and the attempt to influence the independence of the UN organization by pressing the member countries of the World Heritage Committee to vote against the Palestinian request to put Hebron on the World Heritage List.”

It slammed the move as “complete bias in favor of Israel,” and said it “confirms what has been reported in the corridors of the United Nations in New York. Recently, many foreign diplomats have expressed that Haley is an ambassador for Israel more than an ambassador for her country, the United States of America.”

The PA foreign ministry called on the US State Department to clarify its position on Haley’s statements.

Haley has emerged as one of the Trump administration’s most vocally pro-Israel officials and has been the uncontested darling of America’s pro-Israel community since she took office in January.

She has repeatedly taken aim at the world body, accusing it of obsessive preoccupation with, and bias against, Israel.

In March, she told AIPAC that “[The days of Israel bashing are over](http://www.timesofisrael.com/day-2-of-the-aipac-policy-conference/)” at the UN.

She spoke then of having prevented the appointment of Fayyad — a widely respected former Palestinian Authority prime minster — from appointment to lead the world body’s political mission in Libya, noting that while he might be a pleasant individual, “until the Palestinians come to the table” to negotiate peace with Israel, “there are no freebies for the Palestinian Authority any more.”

In June, she indicated before the House Appropriations State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee that she would [block any appointment of a Palestinian official](http://www.timesofisrael.com/haley-promises-to-block-any-appointment-of-palestinian-to-senior-un-post/) to a senior role at the UN because Washington “does not recognize Palestine” as an independent state.

“If we don’t recognize Palestine as a state, we needed to acknowledge also that we could not sit there and put a Palestinian forward until the US changed its determination on that front,” she said.

Haley has also criticized the United Nations for adopting a resolution in December 2016 that demanded an end to Israeli settlement building. That resolution was allowed through after the administration of then US president Barack Obama chose not to use its veto power.

In other comments, she has said that the US embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, upholding a campaign promise of US President Donald Trump, and that the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem is part of Israeli territory — a claim not recognized by the international community.

On Tuesday night, a Jordanian-sponsored resolution on the “Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls” was due to be voted on by UNESCO.

Softer than [last year’s text](http://www.timesofisrael.com/unesco-adopts-another-resolution-erasing-jewish-link-to-temple-mount/), the current resolution still calls Israel “the occupying power” and reaffirms previous UN resolutions denying the country’s claims to East Jerusalem, echoing a resolution passed in May by UNESCO’s executive board. It also “regrets the failure of the Israeli occupying authorities to cease the persistent excavations, tunneling, works, projects and other illegal practices in East Jerusalem, particularly in and around the Old City of Jerusalem, which are illegal under international law.”

But as much as Israel deplores resolutions denying its claims to East Jerusalem, the government’s main focus remains on thwarting Friday’s expected vote to declare the Old City of Hebron — including the Tomb of the Patriarchs — a Palestinian “world heritage site in danger.”

Israel, the US government and several Jewish groups vociferously object to this move, and have called on UN leaders to prevent the vote.