# Israeli and Jewish Officials Slam UNESCO for Passing 'Antisemitic' Resolution

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Israeli and Jewish officials on Tuesday reacted with outrage following UNESCO's 22-10 vote that approved a resolution rejecting Israel's sovereignty in its capital of Jerusalem.

Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, was one of the first to issue an indignant statement, saying that "this distorted decision and the attempts to undermine the connection between Israel and Jerusalem will not change the fact that Jerusalem is the Jewish people's eternal capital."

Danon also stressed that Israel was not going to be passive facing such a move at the UN, adding that "Israel will not carry on silently facing this shameful decision."

Yesh Atid chairman Yair Lapid was even more derisive in his critique of the UNESCO resolution, saying that the decision to pass it was "baseless and antisemitic."

Noting the timing of the resolution's passing, Lapid said that "no one, not even an organization such as UNESCO, can rewrite the Jewish history. Especially not on the day that Israel celebrates 69 years of independence as a democratic and strong country."

"This is a disgraceful attempt to rewrite history as part of an ongoing political campaign against the State of Israel and the Jewish people. Today we saw again how a line of representatives at the UN give in to the antisemitic campaign led by anti-Israel organizations instead of going after the truth."

Other politicians protested the fact that the Jewish people's connection to Jerusalem was undeniably strong and that the country and its capital could not be disjoined. "UNESCO should learn from past mistakes and not question the God-given command that Israel and Jerusalem its capital belong and are sacred to the people of Israel," said MK Ayoub Kara (Likud).

American Jewish organizations also blasted the resolution, pointing an accusatory finger at the Palestinians for using international forums to bash Israel.

“The Palestinian leadership and their allies have consistently abused UNESCO as a forum to censure Israel, including on Israel’s Independence Day today,” CEO of the American Jewish Committee David Harris said in a statement released shortly after the vote.

“It’s a tragedy that the Palestinian Authority (PA) and several Arab countries have sought for a long time to exploit this body to castigate Israel and deny self-evident historical truths in the process,” Harris, who met last week with Italy’s foreign minister as part of AJC’s outreach to UNESCO members in advance of the vote, added.

The resolution comes a year after the UN agency adopted another resolution whose language ignored all Jewish ties to Temple Mount and the Western Wall area in Jerusalem’s Old City.

Tuesday’s 22-10 vote, however was not seen as a diplomatic failure by Israeli officials, who pointed out that  the number of countries who supported Israel or abstained was a "significant victory” as it is the first time that such an initiative at UNESCO has had this little support.

Harris pointed out that UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, was originally established as a non-political body to promote these fields all over the world and the Palestinian “misguided strategy” undermines the agency’s mission.

He also praised the 10 countries who voted against the text for “asserting moral leadership” in rejecting what he described as a “malicious Arab-sponsored resolution.” They include the United States, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Paraguay, Netherlands, Togo, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

The Anti-Defamation League joined AJC in applauding the 10 countries.

Speaking out against the resolution, which he called “defamatory and problematic in the extreme”, CEO of the ADL Jonathan A. Greenblatt also acknowledged “an improvement”.

“The final vote shows the majority of member countries did not vote affirmatively for this resolution,”, adding that he believes “the vote reflects member states’ unease with the biased and undue focus on Israel.”

“Such unbalanced resolutions only sow distrust in the reliability and fairness of international institutions,” he continued.

Roz Rothstein, CEO of the Organization StandWithUs, which aims to educate about Israel, described Tuesday’s move as “yet another political assault on the legitimacy of Israel's presence in its own capital city, and will only serve to fuel further conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.”

“UNESCO should focus on its mission and stop allowing itself to be used as a pawn by anti-Israel governments, Rothstein continued.

Jewish groups had already called on members of UNESCO’s Executive Board to vote against the text earlier this week.

Among them, the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations pointed out that had it targeted any country in the world other than Israel, the resolution would “never see the light of day."
“UNESCO’s actions regarding Jerusalem and other holy sites are an affront to all who want to see meaningful peace negotiations and continue to deny thousands of years of Jewish and Christian history and tradition,” the group stated.