Israel Slams UNESCO's Plan to Declare Temple Mount 'Muslim'

July 15, 2016

By Shlomo Cesana

Israel Hayom

<http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=34981>

Israel on Thursday was outraged to learn that the U.N.'s heritage body was planning to adopt a resolution declaring the Temple Mount sacred to "Muslims only."

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's 21-member World Heritage Committee is set to vote on the resolution, a joint Palestinian-Jordanian initiative, during its annual meeting in Istanbul, which began on Sunday and runs through next week. The resolution calls for a return to the "historic status quo" on the Temple Mount, which it sees as favoring Muslims.

In June, UNESCO adopted a resolution deciding to refer to the holy Jerusalem site only by its Muslim name -- Al-Aqsa mosque -- in all official documents. The current resolution is far more radical, and to Israel's surprise, it has received the EU's blessing.

Political sourced told Israel Hayom that Brussels' decision to back the move most likely stems from the ongoing crisis between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the EU, which seems to be escalating into an actual rift.

"Israel is very concerned by the EU intent to propose a resolution negating the Jewish people's link to the Temple Mount. This would be an alternative proposal to the Palestinian draft currently being discussed by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee during its meeting in Istanbul," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"The EU's proposal continues to deny the Jewish people's historic ties to Temple Mount, despite France's [apology](http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=34061) in April, admitting it was wrong to support UNESCO's decision to address the Temple Mount only as Al-Aqsa mosque."

Israeli Envoy to UNESCO Carmel Shama-Hacohen said, "It appears UNESCO seeks to Islamize the holy places in the Old City of Jerusalem. Instead of saying mea culpa over its April resolution to refer to the site only as 'Al-Aqsa mosque,' UNESCO has decided to add insult to injury and exacerbate this outrageous situation."