Israel condemns UN Security Council session on Ben-Gvir’s ascent to Temple Mount

January 5, 2023

By Mike Wagenheim

I24 News

<https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/diplomacy/1672949726-israel-condemns-un-security-council-session-on-ben-gvir-s-ascent-to-temple-mount>

The United Nations Security Council convened on Thursday for an emergency session over Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir’s ascent to the Temple Mount earlier this week, which Israel condemned as ‘pathetic.’

[**Ben-Gvir,**](https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/politics/1672844639-analysis-how-israel-s-ben-gvir-is-trying-to-change-reality) a controversial far-right figure in Israel's government, visited the holy site in Jerusalem on Tuesday, sparking backlash and widespread criticism of what many called a ‘provocative’ move. The Temple Mount is where Israel's First and Second Temples stood and is the holiest site in Judaism. It is also the site of the Al Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam.

After his ascent, the UN-SC said it would [**hold an emergency session**](https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/diplomacy-politics-stories/1672792527-uae-china-call-for-un-general-assembly-meeting-over-temple-mount) to discuss the first visit by an Israeli government minister to the Temple Mount in five years. While government ministers have come to the holy place in the past, it remains a flash point for escalations between Palestinians and Israelis.

To kick off the session, the representative of the United Arab Emirates said the Gulf state ‘condemns the serious provocations that threaten the Al Aqsa Mosque, and the storming of the mosque by an Israeli minister under the protection of Israeli forces.’

‘Such provocative actions reflect a lack of commitment to the status of the holy site in Jerusalem, and they further destabilize the fragile situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. They also constitute a serious development that moves the region further away from the desired path of peace,’ he urged.

The American representative to the Council followed: [**‘We are concerned**](https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/middle-east/the-gulf/1672748675-uae-joins-other-arab-countries-in-condemning-ben-gvir-s-temple-mount-visit) by any unilateral acts that exacerbate tensions or undermine the viability of a two-state solution. The U.S. firmly supports the preservation of the historic status quo with respect to holy sites in Jerusalem, especially the Temple Mount. It is critical for all sides to exercise restraint and refrain from provocative rhetoric. We expect the Israeli government to follow through on its commitment to retain the status quo.’

Ahead of the UN-SC meeting, Israel’s UN envoy Gilad Erdan said in a press briefing that he was ‘truly shocked.’

‘There is absolutely no reason that this emergency session should be held. To hold it on a non-event is truly absurd,’ he said. ‘Why are we holding an emergency session for something as simple as [**a Jew walking to the holiest site in Judaism?’**](https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/politics/1672723837-israel-s-national-security-minister-ben-gvir-visits-the-temple-mount)

Erdan further pointed to events going on elsewhere in the world which he suggested the council was not responding to nor holding emergency sessions for, urging there was a double standard when it comes to the Jewish state.