Trump Said Bidding to Defeat New Anti-Israel UNESCO Resolution

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The Times of Israel

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-said-bidding-to-defeat-new-anti-israel-unesco-resolution/>

The Trump administration has reportedly ordered US ambassadors in UNESCO member states to initiate meetings with their host countries’ foreign ministries in a bid to defeat an anti-Israel resolution that is to be debated at the UN cultural organization next week.

The passage last October by 23 votes to 6 of a UNESCO resolution sponsored by Arab states that ignored Jewish and Christian historical ties to Jerusalem holy sites sparked an outcry in Israel, and was castigated by then-presidential candidate Donald Trump.

Israel and the United States suspended their funding to UNESCO in 2011 after the Palestinians were admitted as members. Both countries lost their voting rights as a result.

Next Monday, UNESCO is set to vote on a resolution that includes clauses denying any Jewish connection to the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron and Rachel’s Tomb in Bethlehem, and that attacks Israel for the killing of children in Gaza, Israel’s Channel 10 news reported Monday.

The US administration, aware that it will not be able to prevent the introduction of the resolution, is seeking to defeat it. It has issued a démarche to its ambassadors in UNESCO-member countries, telling them to initiate meetings at the host foreign ministries and to convey the US’s hope that those countries will vote against the motion, Channel 10 said.

In the note to its ambassadors, the administration describes the upcoming UNESCO motion as one-sided and counter-productive to US efforts to advance Israeli-Palestinian peace, and expresses dismay at the recurring anti-Israel resolutions at UNESCO.

Trump has [reportedly been considering dramatic steps](http://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-said-set-to-halt-funding-for-un-other-groups-that-give-pa-plo-membership/) to cut US funding to various UN bodies and other institutions.

After the UN Security Council voted in December to brand West Bank settlements illegal, and the Obama administration opted not to veto the resolution, Trump promised that “things will be different” once he took office.

The resolution passed by UNESCO in October referred to the Temple Mount and Western Wall only by their Muslim names and condemned Israel as “the occupying power” for various actions taken at both sites.

The director-general of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, signaled her dismay and opposition to the motion, saying that efforts to deny history and Jerusalem’s complex multi-faith character harm UNESCO. “The heritage of Jerusalem is indivisible, and each of its communities has a right to the explicit recognition of their history and relationship with the city,” Bokova said in a statement at the time.

Bokova’s statement came after Israel announced it was suspending its cooperation with UNESCO over the vote. Israeli leadership [reacted furiously to the resolution](http://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-leads-angry-denunciations-of-absurd-unesco-decision/), with some accusing the UN’s cultural arm of anti-Semitism.