

Israel Argues BBC's Olympics Website Discriminates Against Holy Land

Did the British Broadcasting Company's (BBC) Olympic website purposely omit Jerusalem as the capital of Israel? Israel's Prime Minister thinks so and his office is speaking out about the breach.

The Israel page of the BBC's 2012 Olympic website states, "seat of government Jerusalem, though most foreign embassies are in Tel Aviv." What's more, the website lists "East Jerusalem" as the "intended seat of government" of "Palestine," even though there is no nation recognized as "Palestine."

"Since King David made Jerusalem the capital of Israel, Jerusalem has played a key role in the government, culture, religion and history of the Jewish nation," says Mat Staver, founder and Chairman of Liberty Counsel. "Jerusalem is Israel's capital city. The BBC should list this fact on its Olympics website, like it has done for every other country. The Olympics should transcend politics."

In a letter to BBC Middle East Bureau Chief Paul Danahar, Mark Regrev, advisor of Foreign Press and Public Affairs at the Israeli Prime Minister's Bureau, called the omission "discrimination."

But it wasn't just the omission that caused Israel concern. While the photos identifying Iran, Syria and Libya depicted peaceful cultural scenes, the picture for Israel depicted an Israeli soldier confronting a protester.

Following several letters from Regrev, the BBC modified the website to list Jerusalem as the "seat of government" for

Israel and Jerusalem as the “intended seat of government” for “Palestine.” But Israel supporters say the changes are still not sufficient.

“We cannot accept those who deny our history, our sovereignty and our right to determine our own capital,” says Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat. “Irrespective of the BBC’s political agenda, Jerusalem is, was, and always will be the capital of Israel.”