

Report: Palestinians Seek to Hijack Israel's Dead Sea Scrolls

Palestinians are planning the next stage in their attempted denial of Israel's history and heritage and are preparing to lay claim to the Dead Sea Scrolls at the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Israel Radio* recently reported.

"This is another provocative and audacious attempt by the Palestinians to rewrite history and to erase our connection to our land," Israel's Ambassador to UNESCO Carmel Shama-Hacohen said, according to the *Jerusalem Post*. "The Dead Sea Scrolls are factual and weighty archaeological evidence of the presence of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel."

The scrolls, mostly Hebrew writings from the Second Temple period, were discovered in the Qumran Caves in the environs of the Dead Sea. They include many biblical texts and are believed to have been written by members of a Jewish sect known as the Essenes.

The area in which the scrolls were discovered is under Israeli rule, an area coveted by the Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) wants to see the Qumran cave findings registered under the "state of Palestine" on the World Heritage List, and are seeking to have them wrested from Israel's possession and turned over to them.

In addition, the PA plans to bring the matter up before the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation, a committee that operates in an advisory capacity to UNESCO.

Shama-Hacohen said the Palestinians brought the matter up informally to the committee when it met in Paris at the end of September, during which UNESCO passed a vote that denied the Jewish links to Jerusalem's Old City and the Temple Mount.

Representatives of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) who were present at the meeting submitted a report on the matter to the Foreign Ministry at the end of this week.

This latest Palestinian move is part of a broad campaign to wage war against Israel in all international arenas in an attempt to generate diplomatic pressure and delegitimize it, while robbing it of its national identity and legacy as the Palestinians falsely supplant themselves as the indigenous population in Israel, in ridiculous contradiction to any and all historical and archaeological findings. {eo}

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