

UN Vote Would Make Western Wall a Muslim Site

The Palestinian Authority's latest proposed U.N. resolution, sponsored by UNESCO, claims the Western Wall, known in Hebrew as the Kotel, is part of the al-Aksa Mosque and thereby a Muslim holy site, rather than the last remaining vestige of the Jewish Temple(s).

Sponsored by six member nations of UNESCO's executive board—Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates—the resolution also claims P.A. ownership of Rachel's Tomb near Bethlehem and the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

The majority of UNESCO's 58 member nations have historically supported Palestinian resolutions.

For Bible-believing Jews and Christians, the idea that these historical Jewish sites somehow morphed into Muslim sites is nonsense.

The Bible records that Abraham purchased the cave and the field next to it some 3,700 years ago as a family burial site (see Genesis 23-25), with the exception of Jacob's second wife, Rachel, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, who was buried near Bethlehem (see Genesis 35:16-20).

Israel's Foreign Ministry condemned the petition.

Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely called it another "shameful and deceitful attempt" to rewrite history, predicting it would "fail the test of reality."

"The Temple Mount and the Western Wall in Jerusalem are the cornerstones of Jewish history. They are historical facts no one can dispute," Hotovely said, adding that Abbas is

continuing the legacy of former PLO chairman Yasser Arafat to distort history and work against Jewish-Arab coexistence in Israel.

Meanwhile, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon paid a surprise visit to Israel Tuesday to meet with Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israeli U.N. Ambassador Danny Danon also arrived in Israel Tuesday to sit in on Ban's meeting with Netanyahu. Danon will return to New York to attend Thursday morning's Security Council meeting.

Ban condemned "the dangerous escalation in violence" in Israel, Jerusalem and what he calls "the occupied Palestinian territories."

The U.N. chief said he understands Palestinian anger over the "continued occupation and expansion of settlements," and their disappointment at the inability to end the conflict.

Ban criticized Israel's "apparent excessive use of force," while admitting that security is a priority when children are afraid to go to school and anyone on the street is a potential victim (of an attack).

Meanwhile, B'nai B'rith International strongly condemned "the attempt to rewrite history" in a letter to UNESCO Director General Irena Bokova, calling it a "malicious resolution" and urging her to steer the executive board clear of such a "vile proposal."

Co-signed by B'nai Brith International President Allan J. Jacobs and Executive Vice President Daniel S. Mariaschin, the letter maligns the "blatant hypocrisy that has been percolating with UNESCO."

"The creeping but undisguised historical revisionism and territorial, cultural and civilizational appropriation taking

root at clear which side in the conflict is truly inciting religious tensions and seeking to alter the status quo in Jerusalem," the letter stated.