Rivlin chastises Spain over lack of support for Israel at UN

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Israeli President Reuven Rivlin chastised Spain’s lackluster support for Israel in international forums during a meeting with Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy in Madrid on Tuesday.

Citing Spain’s decision to abstain from a vote on a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) resolution denying the Jewish people’s ties to Jerusalem, Rivlin said, “I wish to remind you that the king of Spain is also called the king of Jerusalem, and to come to UNESCO and deny the connection between the Jewish nation and Jerusalem is not just ignorance, it is an affront to intellectual integrity.”

Rivlin also called on Rajoy to take legislative action against the BDS movement, which he said is “tainted with anti-Semitic elements.”

In a speech to the Spanish parliament, Rivlin addressed Catalonia’s bid for independence from Spain. He said, “Spain is one country for us, and the problems it faces are internal. Our relations with the citizens of Spain are dear to us, and we pray that the current challenge will be solved through understanding.”

Prior to Rivlin’s visit, Israel had remained mum on the issue of Catalonian independence, unlike other major Western countries that backed the Spanish government’s position.

Rivlin was in Spain on a four-day trip marking 30 years of Israel-Spain diplomatic relations as well as the centennial anniversary of the Spanish Jewish community’s resettlement after being expelled in 1492.