# UN Recognizes Yom Kippur as Official Holiday

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The United Nations on Thursday recognized the Day of Atonement — Yom Kippur — as an official holiday, following diplomatic efforts by Israel with American support.

The Israeli delegation to the United Nations touted the achievement as the culmination of a joint effort by Ambassador Danny Danon and US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power. Israel launched a campaign in May 2014 to make Yom Kippur a UN holiday.

Yom Kippur now joins the Christian holidays of Christmas and Good Friday and the Muslim holidays of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha in the list of 11 official UN holidays. The six others are major US holidays — New Year’s Day, Presidents’ Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and Thanksgiving.

No official meetings will take place on the Jewish High Holiday, and Jewish UN employees can observe the holiday without forfeiting a day of vacation.

“Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year for the Jewish People, and the UN should have recognized this holiday many years ago. Today we finally have an official place for the Jewish religion in the World’s parliament,” Danon said in a statement.

Last year, 32 ambassadors signed letters calling on the UN to recognize the Jewish holiday, including the US, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Bahamas, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Dominica, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Ivory Coast, Malawi, Micronesia, Monaco, Nauru, Nigeria, Palau, Panama, Philippines, Rwanda, Samoa, Seychelles, South Sudan, Suriname, Togo, Uruguay and Vanuatu.

The Israeli mission to the United Nations said in a statement that Israeli cooperation with the United States “prevented the anti-Israel majority at the UN from blocking the resolution” to recognize Yom Kippur.

“The American-Israeli Partnership at the UN stands for good versus bad and right versus wrong. The value of justice, anchored in Jewish tradition and thought, will finally find its place in the family of nations, and be a part of the UN’s history,” Danon added.