**Happy Birthday?**

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http://atlantajewishtimes.timesofisrael.com/happy-birthday/

One of the many things that make Israel unique in the world is the response to its birthday.

We don’t remember international condemnation for the United States on the Fourth of July, for Canada on July 1 or for France on July 14 (mazel tov, by the way, to French President-elect Emmanuel Macron on his landslide victory May 7 over the scary Marine Le Pen). But while Israel’s friends sent their best wishes when the Jewish state celebrated its 69th birthday on Yom HaAtzmaut on May 2, others couldn’t resist trying to spoil the party.

Even as the saber-rattling between the United States and nuclear-armed North Korea increased to a level not seen in decades, even as the presidents of Turkey and Venezuela made public efforts to consolidate oppressive power, and even as Syria continued to bleed out, an agency of the United Nations took time to condemn Israel on its Independence Day.

The U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in its ongoing competition with the U.N. Human Rights Council to be the world body’s most anti-Israel arm, enacted its latest resolution denying any Jewish history or legal authority anywhere in Jerusalem and labeling Israel the “occupying power” in its own capital.

We won’t waste time parsing the text of [the resolution](http://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-may-2017-unesco-resolution-on-occupied-palestine/), introduced by the Arab nations of Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar and Sudan and passed 22-10 with 23 abstentions and three of UNESCO’s 58 member nations missing the vote. Some argue that it’s not as bad as similar resolutions UNESCO has passed because it acknowledges Jerusalem’s importance to “the three monotheistic religions” and avoids using “al-Aqsa,” “Haram al-Sharif” and “al-Burak” as well as “Temple Mount” and “Western Wall.”

Regardless of terminology, however, it is a resolution that denies Jewish history and culture and thus violates the supposed purpose of a U.N. agency created to protect cultural heritage. The measure shows again that the United Nations, meant to be a vehicle for peace and understanding, has been twisted to serve as a weapon against the countries that strive for the ideal of pluralistic, representative democracy.

We dream of a not-too-distant future when Egypt, at least, can break Arab solidarity and not sully its shaky reputation by associating itself with such diplomatic attacks on a country with which it is at peace and with which it maintains valuable security cooperation. We hold no such hopes for Qatar and Sudan, which are tightly controlled by anti-Semitic, terrorist-supporting governments.

We salute the 10 countries that stood up for the truth and voted against the resolution: the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Greece, Germany, Lithuania, Ukraine, Paraguay and Togo. Italy deserves particular praise for its early declaration that it would reject any such resolution.

Those seeking a silver lining note that similar UNESCO resolutions received 33 yes votes last spring, then 24 last fall, so support is falling. But we can’t get past the resolutions’ persistent backing from Russia, China, South Africa, Brazil and Sweden.

A lie, after all, is a lie, regardless of the diplomatic games behind it. But perhaps UNESCO did send a valuable, welcome birthday gift by clarifying how few true friends Israel has.