Palestinian Proposal to UNESCO: Western Wall is Part of al-Aqsa

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<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4712189,00.html>

A new proposal to establish that the Western Wall is part of al-Aqsa Mosque is set to be submitted by the Palestinians to a vote at UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) next week, Ynet learned Thursday.

The proposal states among other things that the Western Wall is part of al-Aqsa Mosque, and condemns the Israeli government for its call on citizens to bear arms because of the recent wave of terror attacks – presumably referring to statements by the mayors of [Jerusalem](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4708381,00.html) and the police chief in Ashdod. The proposal was presented to the Executive Council of UNESCO, which has 58 member countries.

Since the Palestinians are not members of the committee, the six Arab states submitted the proposal on behalf of the Palestinians: Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. However, senior Israeli sources say that the Palestinians are simultaneously acting to move the proposal to the UNESCO plenum, in which they are recognized as a state.

Israel has been acting behind the scenes to persuade as many countries as possible to oppose the proposal, or at least to abstain, but it is likely that the proposal will be approved due to the automatic Muslim and Arab majority. Yedioth Ahronoth received a copy of the proposal, which reveals the main points:

**1.** To declare and confirm that the Western Wall is part of al-Aqsa Mosque, and is called Buraq Plaza (as the Palestinians call the Western Wall). The same applies to the Mughrabi Gate.

**2.** The Palestinians want the countries of the world to condemn Israel for calling on its citizens to bear arms in light of recent terror wave. The Palestinian argument is that this has led to the continuation of the cycle of violence and has caused multiple casualties.

**3.** The Palestinians seek to condemn recent actions by Israel and the IDF in Jerusalem, which is called "the occupied capital of Palestine" in the document.

**4.** It calls for a condemnation of Israel for the continued excavations near the Temple Mount and the Old City, in opposition to previous UNESCO decisions. The Palestinians condemn the Israeli refusal to allow UNESCO inspection teams to visit the Temple Mount.

**5.** Harsh condemnation of "Israeli aggression and illegal measures taken against the freedom of worship and access of Muslim to al-Aqsa Mosque and Israel's attempts to break the status quo since 1967". Israel is also accused of preventing clerics, sheikhs and preachers from accessing the mosque, in addition to Israeli security forces arresting many people at the mosques. Israel is also condemned for alleged incursions into the mosque.

**6.** Condemnation of the continued attacks on al-Aqsa Mosque by right-wing Jewish extremists. Palestinians call on Israel, "the occupying power", to take measures to prevent provocations which violate the sanctity of the mosque, and call for an end to the "aggression" which fuels tensions in the area and among believers.

**7.** Condemnation of Israel's decision to build a cable car in East Jerusalem and build "Beit Haliba" (an office building and a museum near the Western Wall), a few other buildings and an elevator near the wall.

**8.** Palestinians call for the confirmation and declaration that the Cave of the Patriarchs and Rachel's Tomb (the supposed resting place of grave of Bilal ibn Rabah, a companion of the Prophet Mohammed) are part of Palestine.

**9.** Condemnation of alleged violence by Israeli settlers and Jewish extremists against Palestinians, including children, intended to harm the character of Hebron. The Palestinians urge "the occupying power" to prevent these attacks.

Israel's Ambassador to UNESCO Carmel Shama Hacohen said in response that while Jews are being massacred on their way to pray, Palestinians are asking to strongly condemn violence and illegal measures that allegedly infringe on the religious freedom of Muslims.

 "The Palestinians continue to add fuel to the fire of incitement and ongoing terror," Shama Hacohen said. "In my first speech to UNESCO last year I warned the world’s countries that false incitement by the Palestinians against Israel especially regarding the Temple Mount means playing with fire. At the last conference in Bonn, I suggested registering the Palestinianian culture of lies as an intangible world heritage site."

Shama Hacohen added: "The new proposal is tantamount to pouring fuel on the fire of incitement and ongoing terror instead of being responsible and calming the situation down. Of course we must not despair or get alarmed, as they have lies whereas we have the ethical, realistic and historical truth, and it will triumph. The Jewish people and the Western Wall are one and the chances of the Palestinians to Islamize the Western Wall are the same as the chances of Islamizing the Jewish people. Even the morning after the vote the Israeli flag will fly over the wall.

"We pay a high cost for our existence in our country, but there is no responsible partner able to reduce this cost in the near future, because apart from the question of their right to a state in our country, their conduct raises a critical question regarding their ability to act as a responsible country and this is the saddest conclusion from the Palestinian’s conduct at UNESCO,” concluded Shama Hacohen.