**US official raps ‘biased’ UNESCO resolution on Jerusalem**

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The United States rejects the “biased” and “counterproductive” UNESCO resolution passed Tuesday that suggested Israel has no sovereign claim to Jerusalem, a spokesman for the US Mission to the United Nations told The Times of Israel.

“Once again, the United States rejects the adoption of these anti-Israel resolutions at UNESCO,” the US official said. “Like other parts of the UN system, UNESCO is too often used as a vehicle by member states inclined to deride and delegitimize the State of Israel.”

The vote, which coincided with Israel’s 69th Independence Day, was passed Tuesday with 22 countries in favor, 23 abstentions, 10 opposed, and the representatives of three countries absent.

Titled “Occupied Palestine,” the resolution refers to Israel as the “occupying power” in Jerusalem — language that indicates it has no legal or historical ties to any part of the city.

Such motions that target Israel have become routine at the UN’s cultural body in recent years.

“Although several of these anti-Israel resolutions are typically adopted biannually at UNESCO, over time they have become increasingly political in nature, and now attempt to deny the historic connections of the Jewish people to the holy sites of Jerusalem,” the US official said.

“These biased resolutions are counterproductive to the core work of UNESCO, discredit the organization, and do nothing to advance Israeli-Palestinian issues,” the official added. “There is no place for them in an organization that is meant to be impartial.”

The text also castigates Israel’s conduct, including for various construction projects in Jerusalem’s Old City, as well as at holy sites in the West Bank city of Hebron. It also calls for an end to Israel’s blockade of Gaza and does not mention frequent rocket attacks emanating from the Hamas-run coastal enclave.

Its wording, however, was less harsh on the topic than previous UNESCO resolutions. Unlike others, it does affirm the resonance of Jerusalem to the “three monotheistic religions.”

Also unlike previous resolutions, this one does not refer to the Temple Mount only as Haram al-Sharif, or to the Western Wall Plaza only as al-Burak plaza — the respective sites’ Muslim names.The sites are not mentioned at all.

Tuesday’s motion received less support than others critical of Israel, something the US official acknowledged. “We are encouraged by the diminishing levels of support for these resolutions, and we are grateful for those member nations who today voted against the resolution,” he said.

The official would not say exactly how the US will respond.

“We are disappointed these kind of resolutions continue to receive attention in UNESCO, and we will continue to advocate for the fair treatment of Israel in all international fora,” he said.

At the AIPAC conference in March, US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley gave a thunderous speech in which she vowed to tackle the Israel bias at the world body, declaring there was [“a new sheriff in town.”](http://www.timesofisrael.com/nikki-haley-tells-aipac-days-of-israel-bashing-at-the-un-are-over/)

“If you challenge us, be prepared for what you’re challenging us for, because we will respond,” she exclaimed, adding that she let her colleagues in New York know “the days of Israel bashing are over.”

Last Friday, [all 100 US senators signed a letter](http://www.timesofisrael.com/all-100-us-senators-to-un-end-unacceptable-anti-israel-bias/)to the United Nations, saying the “unacceptable” treatment of Israel at the international body must end.