**Romanian PM to JPost: We Oppose Terrorist Salaries, UNESCO Resolution**

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http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Romanian-PM-opposes-terrorist-salaries-UNESCO-resolution-489873

Romania opposes the Palestinian Authority’s payments to terrorist families, its Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu told The Jerusalem Post this week during his first visit to Israel.

"It is against our values" and those of Israel and the EU, Grindeanu said.

The tall 43-year-old head of state arrived in Israel on May 3 for his first visit to the country since taking office in January. During his two days in Jerusalem, he held talks Israeli politicians and visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Western Wall and Yad Vashem.

Grindeanu did not simultaneously visit the Palestinian territories

He met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday, just after US President Donald Trump had [brought up the issue with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas](http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Prime-Minister-Netanyahu-Abbas-lied-to-Trump-489836).

“The fight against terror is what unifies us,” Grindeanu said.

The question of the PA payments to families of terrorists was among the hot button topics in Israel during his visit, as was the over issue of a renewed Israeli-Palestinian peace process after a three-year freeze.

Grindeanu spoke against terror at his joint press conference with Netanyahu, stating, “Romania remains strong working to fight against terrorism, we condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and stress there can be no justification for such acts.”

He told the Postthat he believed that dialogue was the only resolution to the conflict.

Grindeanu also weighed in the issue of the UNESCO’s Executive Board 58-member vote to [disavow Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem](http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/UNESCO-disavows-Israeli-sovereignty-in-Jerusalem-in-22-10-vote-489538).

Romania, like all EU countries, does not recognize Israeli sovereignty in east Jerusalem. But Grindeanu had no problem explaining that he believed he was in Israel as he sat in the lobby of the King David Hotel in the western part of the city.

He had no answer, however, to the question of whether Romania would consider moving its embassy from Tel Aviv to west Jerusalem.

But to thePost, he stressed the fact that Israel was Romania’s strongest ally in the Middle East.

More significantly, he noted that Romania was among the first countries to establish full diplomatic ties with the Jewish state, doing so on June 11, 1948, just after the end of the War of Independence.

The two countries have held two intergovernmental sessions and are planning a third such meeting.

The Romanian Jewish community dates back to the 2nd century, and by the time of the Holocaust numbered over 700,000. Today, there are less than 4,000 Jews in Romania.

Famous author and Nobel laureate Eli Wiesel is one of the more famous survivors of the Romanian Jewish community.

During his remarks at Yad Vashem, Grindeanu recalled how in “communist Romania, it was impossible to speak of the Holocaust.

“My generation had the chance to contribute to the political decision of bringing those pages of history back into the public by recognizing past mistakes and tragedies, and by improving education."

“It is my pledge that Romania will always be on the front line of combating antisemitism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination,” he said.

Grindeanu recalled that last year the Romanian parliament passed legislation to help Holocaust survivors reclaim their property.

Netanyahu told Grindeanu before their meeting, “There are four hundred thousands Israelis of Romanian origin... We feel a special and intimate kinship with Romania, we have been there many times. You have taken a very strong stance against antisemitism, against the desecration of Jewish cemeteries,” Netanyahu said.

The Israeli Prime Minister also spoke of the business ties between the two countries, which signed a joint declaration on roaming rates to bring down cellular costs.

Grindeanu told Netanyahu he wanted to increase economic ties in the fields of cyber and digital industries, as well as in agriculture and tourism.

“Romania has a fast growing economy which offers in return... potential for Israeli businesses... Romania could be seen as one of the most attractive country destinations for European and Israeli companies,” he said.