# Will Iran lead United Nations agency?

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There is growing concern in the Israeli Mission to the United Nations that a prominent UN agency could soon find itself with an Iranian representative at its helm, Israel Hayom reported.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been at the center of a string of controversies involving Israel recently, including the passage of resolutions denying the Jewish link to Jerusalem and key religious sites in the city, including the Temple Mount.

Iran’s representative at UNESCO, Ahmad Jalali, is a leading candidate in the UNESCO Steering Committee’s upcoming internal election.

The UNESCO Steering Committee, which includes 58 countries of the 195 currently represented at the UN, holds elections for committee chair every two years. The current UNESCO committee chair is Michael Worbs, a member of Germany’s UN delegation and a part of UNESCO’s Group I, made up of Western states.

The next UNESCO chair is expected to be chosen from Group IV, which is made up of countries across Asia - including Iran.

Iran, say members of Israel’s UN Mission, is making a concerted effort to win this year’s election, slated for October. The Iranian candidate, Ahmad Jalali, chaired UNESCO’s 31st General Conference in 2001, and appears well-positioned to win.

Israel’s representative at UNESCO, Carmel Shama-Hacohen, called the idea of Iran heading the organization “absurd”, but added that in the UN, anything was possible.

“Having an Iranian as chairman of UNESCO is completely absurd; but in UNESCO, any absurdity is liable to become a disturbing reality.”