Livni urges UNESCO: Don't make organization into a political arena

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http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4983247,00.html

MK Tzipi Linvi (Zionist Union) spoke at an UNESCO conference in Paris on Friday about how the Palestinians take advantage of the organization to pass anti-Israeli resolutions.

Livni, Israel's former foreign minister, was invited to give the closing speech at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's "Soft Power Today: Fostering Women's Empowerment and Leadership" event.

During her address, Livni revealed she was at first unsure whether to attend the conference, "after the adoption of [distorted resolutions about Jerusalem](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4956465,00.html), and with a [fraudulent resolution about Hebron](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4976712,00.html) currently on the table."

Next week, the UNESCO's World Heritage Committee is expected to vote on a resolution draft calling to recognize Hebron's Old City—and with it the Cave of the Patriarchs—as a Palestinian World Heritage Site. Another resolution against Israel's sovereignty in Jerusalem is also expected to go to a vote soon.

"I lead the opposition in Israel, but not an opposition to the history of my people nor an opposition to the truth," Livni said. "These resolutions won't harm my people's ties to these sites, but they will harm UNESCO and the ability to advance shared efforts. This is not the way. It prevents cooperation, the kind we are trying to do here today."

The MK went on to say that "UNESCO must not be made into a political arena. There are delegations here from countries that have conflicts, but we must leave these conflicts outside the building. Unfortunately, there are member states that take advantage of UNESCO for political interests and open conflicts."

Livni also raised the matter in her meeting with UNESCO's chairwoman, Irina Bokova.

Speaking about the topic at hand, women's rights, Livni said, "As a society becomes more frightened and violent, women are the first to get hurt. There are places in the world where 'The Handmaid's Tale' is not a dystopian story, but part of reality. We don't belong to anyone. We belong to ourselves. Our free thought is our own and our body is our own."