



American Jewish Congress and American Council for World Jewry

31st Annual International Mayors Conference

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International delegation of mayors slams UNESCO resolution on Jerusalem

By i24news
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The Daily Beat with Meredith Ross - 11/17/2016



To watch the video, click [here](#)



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Mayors visiting Israel condemn 'politically inspired falsehood'

Twenty international mayors on Thursday presented a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that denounced a recent UNESCO resolution that described holy sites in Jerusalem's Old City solely by their Muslim names, the *Jerusalem Post* reports.

The UNESCO resolution prompted accusations that the organization was erasing the city's Jewish and Christian heritage.

The mayors, part of a 21-person delegation visiting Israel for the American Jewish Congress, said in the letter that UNESCO had "joined the community of deniers by voting in a secret ballot that Jews and Christians have no connection to the Old City of Jerusalem," and they vowed to "work to end politically inspired falsehood and distortion, and to speak truth about all relevant history," said the report.

The visiting mayors hail from countries on five continents, including the United States, Ukraine, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Portugal, and Panama.

The delegation is headed by American Jewish Congress President Jack Rosen, who told the *Jerusalem Post* that its goal is to show potential decision makers a side of Israel not showed by media outlets – "To see facts on the ground, so that they be a voice of reason concerning issues surrounding Israel," Rosen told the newspaper.

"It is not just about hard politics but also about smart technologies, science and innovation," he said.

Read more: [UNESCO adopts controversial resolution on Jerusalem holy sites](#)

THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

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Visiting mayors slam UNESCO holy sites stance

In Israel, 20 heads of cities across the world object to UN cultural body's resolution ignoring Jewish, Christian links to Jerusalem

BY RAOUL WOOLLIFF AND SHOSHANNA SOLOMON | November 17, 2016, 4:41 pm |  1



Delegation of global mayors in Tel Aviv (Courtesy)

Twenty mayors from around the world who are part of a delegation visiting Israel have expressed opposition to two recent UNESCO resolutions that omitted Jewish and Christian links to Israeli holy sites in Jerusalem.

The mayors, visiting Israel as part of a conference organized by the American Jewish Congress and the American Council for World Jewry, signed a joint statement criticizing the recent adoption by two UNESCO committees of resolutions that ignore Jewish ties to Jerusalem's Temple Mount and other holy sites in Israel, while highlighting the Islamic connection.

The statement was signed during a ceremony at the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem.

The statement was to be presented to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during the 21 mayors' meeting with the premier on Thursday afternoon.

The mayors resolved "to work to end politically inspired falsehood and distortions, and to speak the truth about all relevant history."

The statement also called on UNESCO to "cease repeatedly exacerbating tensions, as evidenced by the most recent news of disputing Israeli heritage of the Dead Sea Scrolls, one of the major archaeological discoveries of the 20th century that sheds light on the biblical era."

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THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

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The resolution signed by the mayors calls on UNESCO to cease exacerbating tensions and to refrain from "injecting false narratives as part of a disinformation campaign by biased parties."

The city heads are participating in the 31st International Mayors Conference organized by the American Jewish Congress and American Council for World Jewry (ACWJ).

In October, UNESCO ratified a controversial resolution that ignored Jewish and Christian ties to Jerusalem's holy sites. Israelis and many Jews around the world view the move as the latest example of an ingrained anti-Israel bias at the United Nations, where Israel and its allies are far outnumbered by Arab countries and their supporters.



Ellie Stern (left) AJCongress Executive Director, AJCongress President Jack Rosen, and Dr. Munir Kazmir, AJCongress Vice President, hold the signed resolution (Courtesy)

The delegation includes mayors from across five continents: from Beverly Hills, Bridgeport, Irving, Miami Beach, in the US, the mayor of Tainan in Taiwan, Lviv, in the Ukraine, San Miguelito in Panama, Homabay County in Kenya, Jaen in Spain, George in South Africa and Viseu in Portugal.

"We were deeply disappointed with the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for adopting a resolution that was extremely discriminatory and seeks to undermine Jewish and Christian history," said Jack Rosen, the president of the American Jewish Congress and chairman of the American Council for World Jewry in a statement. "This resolution, signed by mayors of different faiths and backgrounds, demonstrates that this sentiment is held by many across the world. We urge UNESCO to understand the strength of feeling opposing this decision and reconsider their resolution."

The delegation has met in Israel with high-tech, energy and cyber companies as well as urban development experts.

The aim of the delegation is "make new friends for Israel," said Rosen in a phone interview earlier this week. "We want to expose them to seeing the reality on the ground, get them to see some of Israel's tech innovation" to counteract some of what they see via the media in their home countries, he said.

As part of their trip, the mayors visited Jerusalem Innovation Center and Israel's largest telecommunications company Bezeq, and took part in a Tel Aviv startup tour.

They also met with representatives of local municipalities, including the Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat and Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai.

Philip Levine, the mayor of Miami, said in a phone interview that he had discussed initiating a nonstop flight from Miami to Tel Aviv with the Tourism Ministry.

THE JERUSALEM POST

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Int'l mayors denounce UNESCO for ignoring Temple Mount ties

• By TAMARA ZIEVE

An international delegation of mayors presented a resolution to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday, decrying the recent UNESCO resolution that denies Jewish and Christian ties to the Temple Mount.

The resolution states that UNESCO must cease to repeatedly exacerbate tensions.

"In recent days, UNESCO joined the community of deniers by voting in a secret ballot that Jews and Christians have no connection to the Old City of Jerusalem, and referencing religious sites there by only their Arab name," states the letter, signed by 20 of the visiting 21 mayors.

In Israel to attend the American Jewish Congress' annual Mayors Conference, the mayors stated their resolve to "work to end politically inspired falsehood and distortion, and to speak truth about all relevant history." Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre refused to sign the resolution, but



A GROUP OF 21 mayors in Israel for the annual Mayors Conference sponsored by the American Jewish Congress pose for a portrait while visiting Tel Aviv this week. (Courtesy)

offered no explanation why.

The delegation is led by AJCongress President and American Council for World Jewry Chairman Jack Rosen. The mayors in the delegation hail from cities across five continents, including Beverly Hills and Miami Beach (US), Lviv (Ukraine), San Miguelito (Panama), Homabay County (Kenya), Dar e Salam (Tanza-

nia), George (South Africa) and Viseu (Portugal).

This is the 31st year AJCongress has held this event. Rosen explained that the idea behind the delegation is to bring to Israel potential future decision makers who can have an impact in their countries.

"We try to choose mayors who will have a political platform," he told *The Jerusalem*

Post, noting that two years ago Argentinean President Mauricio Macri was in the delegation, and the year before that Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi.

The organization strives to show the mayors a side of Israel they can't read about in the news, "to see facts on the ground, so that they be a voice of reason concerning issues surrounding Israel," Rosen says.

The AJCongress has been leading a science diplomacy initiative working with Israeli companies and political leaders to advance Israel's case to the world through showcasing technology and innovation.

"It is not just about hard politics, but also about smart technologies, science and innovation," Rosen said. "We are working with key figures in Israel such as MK Erel Margalit and Prime Minister Netanyahu to make this happen."

John Mirisch, mayor of Beverly Hills, described the visit as a "wonderful way for mayors from around the world to understand not only the history of Israel, but the future of Israel and how important Israeli tech is within what we consider to be disruptive technologies of today. Not only is it a great place to do business, but a wonderful asset to the world in terms of the development of technologies."

Melvin Naik, mayor of George, said, "I can take a lot from here. I would like to connect with Israelis and take some of the expertise back home."

ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

International mayors denounce UNESCO for ignoring Jewish ties to Temple Mount

- › In dramatic vote, UNESCO Jerusalem resolution passes with slim support
- › Netanyahu recalls Israeli envoy to UNESCO for 'consultations'

Mayors hand letter to Netanyahu, state that UNESCO must cease to exacerbate tensions.



The Temple Mount in Jerusalem - (photo credit: JACK BROOK)

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