

UNESCO Calls on Israel to Respect Aqsa Mosque



Paris, April 21 (RHC)-- The UN cultural body UNESCO has urged Israel to respect the al-Aqsa Mosque Compound, which is the scene of frequent raids by Israeli extremists. UNESCO chief Irina Bokova's call for "respect and dialogue" came after Israel reacted with outrage to the UN body's adoption of a resolution on "Occupied Palestine."

The resolution refers to Israel several times as the "occupying power," while referring to the holy site by only its Arab name and criticizes Tel Aviv for "excavations and works" in East Jerusalem. It also urges Israel to stop "aggressions and illegal measures against the freedom of worship and Muslims' access" to their holy site.

Bokova said: "Jerusalem is a Holy Land of the three monotheistic religions, a place of dialogue for all Jewish, Christian and Muslim people. Nothing should be undertaken to alter its integrity and authenticity."

The UNESCO resolution was approved by 33 states, including France, Russia, Spain and Sweden. Seventeen countries abstained while six voted against including the United States, Estonia, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.



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