

# *UNESCO Condemns Israeli Aggression in Occupied Jerusalem*

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Geneva, October 14 (RHC)-- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has denounced Israeli violations in and around the al-Haram al-Sharif (also known as the Temple Mount) compound in the occupied Old City of Jerusalem.

Twenty-four countries, including Algeria, Brazil, China, Iran, Russia and South Africa, voted in favor of the UNESCO resolution on Thursday, while the six countries of the United States, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Lithuania and Estonia opposed it.

A total of 26 countries, including Albania, Argentina, France, Greece, Japan, South Korea, Spain and Sweden abstained from the vote. Serbia and Turkmenistan were absent.

The resolution strongly condemned "the escalating Israeli aggression and illegal measures against... the freedom of worship and Muslims' access to their holy site al-Aqsa Mosque/al-?aram al-Sharif," and called on "Israel, the occupying power, to respect the historic status quo and to immediately stop these measures."

The UNESCO statement also criticized the “continuous storming of Haram al-Sharif by the Israeli right-wing extremists and uniformed forces.” Al-Aqsa Mosque is the third holiest site in Islam after Masjid al-Haram in Mecca and Masjid al-Nabawi in Medina.

The UNESCO resolution, which was submitted by the Palestinians supported by Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar and Sudan, raised Israeli officials' ire.

“The theater of the absurd continues with UNESCO and today the organization has made its most bizarre decision by saying the people of Israel have no connection to the Temple Mount and the Western Wall,” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu commented.

The occupied territories have already been the scene of increased tensions ever since Israeli forces imposed restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshippers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem al-Quds in August 2015.

Nearly 250 Palestinians have lost their lives at the hands of Israeli forces since the beginning of last October.

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