



Written by [James Murphy](#) on January 2, 2019

U.S. and Israel Formally Leave UNESCO

As of January 1, the United States and Israel formally left the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The departure, which was announced by the Trump administration in October of 2017 with Israel closely following suit, had been brewing since at least 2011 when both countries stopped paying dues to the organization because of an extreme anti-Israel bias.



Since 2011, the United States has accrued \$600 million in unpaid dues to the organization. Israel has amassed about \$10 million in back payments. Neither country has had voting rights in the organization since 2013 due to the unpaid dues.

Outgoing U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley had some harsh words for UNESCO. She [tweeted on Tuesday](#), “UNESCO is among the most corrupt and biased UN agencies. Today, the U.S. withdrawal from this cesspool became official.”

Of course, it’s corrupt. It’s part of the UN.

On Tuesday, Israel’s envoy to the UN, Danny Danon said that his country “will not be a member of an organization whose goal is to deliberately act against us, and that has become a tool of Israel’s enemies.”

Israel’s complaints against UNESCO go back years and center around historic sites that are important to the nation but that the UN insists are Palestinian and not Israeli. “UNESCO is a body that continually rewrites history, including by erasing the Jewish connection to Jerusalem,” Danon said.

A former Israeli ambassador to the United States, Michael Oren, compared UNESCO’s treatment of Israel to that of empires past. “UNESCO has joined a long list — Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Ayatollahs — who deny the eternal connection between the Jewish nation and its capital of Jerusalem. We will be in our capital forever and UNESCO, like all those who came before it, will fail.”

UNESCO was founded in 1946, shortly after the UN itself was founded. The organization’s goals are “to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communications and information.” The United States was a founding member, and Israel joined in 1949, just after it became a nation.

In 2017, UNESCO earned Israel’s wrath by declaring the core of the Old City of Hebron a Palestinian World Heritage site. The site is sacred to all three of the world’s major monotheistic religions, but the Jews honor it as the Tomb of the Patriarchs, as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are said to be buried there. UNESCO also declared that the site was in “danger” and specifically blamed Israel for damage and vandalism that had occurred at the site.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was appalled at the decision, calling it “delusional.”

“This time they determined that the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron is a Palestinian Site, i.e., not Jewish, and that the site is in danger. Not a Jewish site?!”



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In 2012, UNESCO also declared Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity as a Palestinian World Heritage Site, angering both Jews and Christians.

Since its beginning, the Trump administration has been at odds with the United Nations over its rabid anti-Israel positions. Of 27 condemnations issued by the UN General Assembly in 2018, Israel received 21 of them while habitual human rights abusers such as China and Iran received none.

But beginning with Trump's 2017 decision to move the U.S. embassy in Israel to Jerusalem — something that has been promised since the Clinton administration — America has, more often than not, sided with Israel against the UN.

In 2017, the United States decided it was leaving the Paris Climate Accord, the UN's unenforceable scheme to keep global temperature increase at under 2 degrees Celsius.

In 2018, the United States [withdrew from the ridiculous UN Human Rights Council](#) because of the fact that many members of the council — China, Cuba, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, just to name a few — are among the worst human rights abusers.

The UN boasts [dozens of alphabet organizations](#) with important-sounding names: the World Health Organization; the Food and Agriculture Organization; the International Atomic Energy Agency; the International Monetary Fund; the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The list goes on. Does the United States need to be a part of any of them?

The United Nation's hatred of Israel is deeply ingrained, and it is a problem that an organization whose stated goal is the establishment of world peace exhibits an institutional bigotry against one specific member. One gets the feeling that the UN hates America as well, but it needs the United States, and so it puts up with us.

The obvious anti-Israel bias of the United Nations brings to mind the Prophet Zechariah, who thousands of years ago wrote, "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem." Zechariah 12:2 (KJV).



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