



UNESCO against Israel

The State of Israel is nowadays the target of an international delegitimation campaign unprecedented in history. This campaign is active in several fronts, using international bodies such as the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council to demonize Israel, as the Friends of Israel Initiative has constantly claimed and denounced.

The last international institution to distort history and facts in order to erode Israel's legitimacy has been the UNESCO, "the intellectual agency of the UN" –as the same body likes to call itself-, the organization which supposedly dedicates to "contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through educational, scientific, and cultural reforms". On April 15 and on October 13, the UNESCO Executive Board passed two resolutions deliberately ignoring the Jewish People's link to the Jerusalem Old City. Besides, the World Heritage Committee passed on October 26 a similar resolution that silenced again the Jewish character of Jerusalem. Beyond all historical and archeological consideration, the UNESCO chose to embrace a political bias against Israel and against all the Jews in the world –betraying one of its major goals: "Peace must be established on the basis of humanity's moral and intellectual solidarity."

Therefore, the UNESCO and its bodies have been also kidnapped by the international delegitimation campaign against the State of Israel that the Palestinian Authority and its allies have implemented over the last years. It is unacceptable that UNESCO, and its members, agree on vote and pass these kinds of resolutions; Western countries like Italy, Spain and France abstained and thus allowed to convert the resolution in a weapon against Israel's legitimacy, in an insult to the entire Jewish people. In addition, the resolution is another absurdity that puts the peace between Israelis and Palestinians away.

The resolutions of the Executive Board of the UNESCO, besides of denying the historical Jewish connection with Jerusalem –and also Christian's-, deliberately ignore the Israel's protection of freedom of worship and the guarantee of freedom of access to the holy sites of the three faiths in the Jerusalem Old City that the Israeli authorities provide; and what is even worse, they issue a libel by accusing Israel of harming the integrity of the Old City. Since June 1967, Israel has protected the freedom of religion in Jerusalem and has promoted the restoration and conservation of the holy sites in the Old City -by the way, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas started a wave of indiscriminate attacks against innocent Israeli civilians claiming falsely the opposite.

The global outrage in the wake of the resolution of the Executive Board of the UNESCO did not avoid thirteen days later the passing of a resolution that intended to manipulate again the history of Jerusalem Old City in the World Heritage Committee. The UNESCO hence has lost its prestige as a custodian of the cultural heritage of the humankind, and it has sided politically with those who want to eradicate Israel's position as a legitimate nation-State in the international community.

In response, the Friends of Israel Initiative has carried out important actions: a letter to the UNESCO director general Ms. Irina Bokova to transmit her our strong condemnation the UNESCO's attitude towards Israel, and to the World Heritage Committee chairperson Ms. Lale Ulk er asking her to reconsider the position of the body before the vote of the new resolution. FOII's Board Members have also published in the media op-eds and articles exposing the infamous moves of the UNESCO, highlighting the undeniable and unbreakable bonds of the Jewish People and Jerusalem Old City.

As always, those who want to delegitimize Israel's existence will face the FOII's strong opposition.

FOII's [Campaign](#) against UNESCO resolutions

Diplomacy

[Letter](#) to the Director General of the UNESCO Ms. Irina Bokova

[Letter](#) to the Chairperson of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee Ms. Lale Ulkär

Op-eds

"The Unesco barbarians, just like in Palmira" by Fiamma Nirenstein ([read](#))

"Spain and Jerusalem: total confusion" by Rafael Bardaji ([read](#))

"UNESCO, Wednesday take two" by Fiamma Nirenstein ([read](#))

Understanding the Future: the Strategic Outlook Series



Currently, the Middle East is collapsing. The failed Arab Spring, the ongoing civil war in Syria, the expansion of the Islamic State and its escalation show a chaotic situation that is far from being contained; on the contrary, it can spill over into other countries in South Asia, South-East Asia, Europe and the entire West — even though the closest targets are failed regimes, Israel, and pro-Western conservative Arab states.

Under this unpredictable scenario, it is important to create and shape American and European policies for the Middle East and align them closer with Israel. In this regard, one of the major FOII's undertakings for 2016 is the Strategic Outlook Series Project, which consists on an integrated study that, on the one hand, defines the perspective of Europe, the West and other major powers such as China and Russia, influenced by events in the Middle East and, on the other hand, the Israeli perspective, its role as a partner and reliable ally for the West, and its role within the Middle East for the coming years. In this sense, the Friends of Israel Initiative has always showed the importance of Israel as the fulcrum where Western allies and pro-Western Arab states can rely on in order to build a safer and more stable Middle East.

The Strategic Outlook Series are based on research and high-level discussions with the participation of former senior officials, top experts and advisors, and political figures that have provided their knowledge and their concern over the developments to come in the international framework due to the new configuration of the Middle East.

The first study, *The Middle East, Israel and Western Strategic Interests*, authored by the Middle East expert Dr. Shmuel Bar, discerns a new regional picture, details implications and outlines core issues in the new regional disorder of the Middle East. The second study, *The New Middle East and Its Consequences (Essays from an Israeli, American and European Perspective)* elaborated by Jonathan Spyer, Elliot Abrams and Bruno Tertrais, attempts to understand the new realities after the deep chaos and disorder in the Middle East through Israeli, American and European eyes. The third study, *The Meaning of the Russian Deployment Throughout the Middle East*, authored by the General Yaakov Amidror, is an analysis on the reasons behind Russia's increasing involvement in the Middle East.

In 2017 the Strategic Outlook Series project seeks to carry on by developing new strategic reports on Syria, Turkey and Egypt.

These series of strategic studies will enable decision makers and high-level leaders to get a better understanding of the options available for the upcoming future, irremediably shaped by a new Middle East where the West, the Sunni

States, Russia, China and Israel, have a role to play.

[Read](#) the Strategic Outlook Series.

FOII'S ACTIVITIES

Op-eds

“Keep calm and work with Israel to defeat the security threat from Islamic State” Lord David Trimble and Robert Quick, *The Telegraph*, October 27.

Lord David Trimble and Robert Quick, members of the FOII-sponsored High Level Home Front Group explain how Israel's expertise is essential to fight Jihadism and confront the threats of the Islamic State in the Western cities.

[Read](#) the op-ed.

Public Presentation of the Strategic Outlook Series in the House of Commons



On November 3, FOII presented in London at the House of Commons the three first reports of the Strategic Outlook Series: *The Middle East, Israel and Western Strategic Interests*, *The New Middle East and its Consequences* and , *The Meaning of the Russian Deployment Throughout the Middle East*. The event was hosted by the Conservative Friends of Israel and the Labour Friends of Israel.

The public presentation was led by Canada's former Ministry of Foreign Affairs, John Baird, and Italy's former Ministry of Foreign Affairs Giulio Terzi, both distinguished FOII Board members, who highlighted the importance of these studies for the future of the West and the Middle East as well as the essential role that Israel is playing for global security and stability. Dr. Shmuel Bar, author of one of the reports, explained and outlined his conclusions drawing the possible scenarios of the upcoming new Middle East.

In the end of 2016, additional launching events will be held in key Western capitals to increase policy and media awareness for the project and its findings. Moreover, participants in the project will produce op-eds and commentaries to be published in major Western media outlets.



"To maintain that Jerusalem and Judaism do not have a relationship is to argue that the sun gets dark: something incomprehensible, indefensible and wrong"

Matteo Renzi

Help us now

Your contribution is all the more welcome now that the Friends of Israel Initiative is up and running and you can be rest assured that it will be put to effective use to further the cause.

[Donate to Friends of Israel Initiative](#)

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