**UNESCO ratifies Jerusalem resolution, Mexico withdraws support**

October 18, 2016

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Jerusalem Post

http://m.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Mexico-to-withdraw-support-for-UNESCOs-Jerusalem-resolution-470325#article=7783RTVEOTg0NjFDOUE2Qjc1QUM4ODQwNzE1NDM1RjM0NEE=

UNESCO’s Executive Board on Tuesday afternoon ratified a 24-6 vote taken last week on a resolution that ignored Jewish ties to the Temple Mount.

Under pressure from Western states, Mexico backed away from its initial intention to call for a new vote on the resolution so that it could withdraw its support from the resolution.

Instead Mexico noted for the record that its position on the matter was one of abstention, but its statement does not technically change the vote numerical count as the 58-member board wrapped up its 200th session in Paris.

Mexico’s Foreign Ministry posted a statement on its web site that it had abstained in recognition of the undeniable Jewish cultural heritage that is located in east Jerusalem.

It added that it was also doing so out of a deep appreciation for the contribution the Jewish community has played in Mexico’s economic, social and cultural development.

Brazil also spoke at the final board session and indicated that it was unlikely to support such resolutions in the future.

Israel’s Ambassador to UNESCO Carmel Shama-Hacohen said after the ratification, “We have moved forward a step-and-a-half toward dismantling the automatic majority that the Palestinians and the Arab states have against Israel.”

“Mexico has taken a full step toward abandoning support of the Palestinians, after years of voting without hesitation against Israel.

“The best surprise of the morning,” he said,  “is Brazil’s notification that while it did not change its vote this time, it will find it difficult not to do, if there is a resolution with another text that disregards the Jewish people’s connection to the Temple Mount and the Western Wall,” Shama-Hacohen said.

He had led Israel’s campaign to halt the resolution’s passage and had always said that he believed it would be approved.

The issue for Israel with this particular resolution, he had said, would be the countries that voted against the text or abstained.

MK Amir Ohana (Likud) welcomed news of Mexico’s new position, particularly given that it had supported a similar resolution that came before the Executive Board last April.

"It's a great Israel achievement that Mexico, which traditionally votes with the Arab countries, is asking to change its vote," MK Amir Ohana (Likud) said.

Tuesday’s ratification of the Jerusalem resolution followed a number of dramatic behind the scenes twists and turns.

UNESCO's Executive Board often approves en masse preliminary votes taken during its sessions. But member states have the option to open resolutions up for debate and/or to change their votes. They can also ask for a delay in the resolution’s approval.

Israel had initially expected that a number of countries would ask for a delay in voting on the resolution all together.

The board’s chairman Michael Worbs had appeared to be in favor of the delay, both because he opposed the resolution and also because he wanted to see a consensus text on Jerusalem brought before the board.

Last Thursday, 26 nations abstained from supporting the resolution and two were absent from the room.

By Saturday night, however, UNESCO’s Arab group pressured Worbs to recuse himself from the proceedings and to hand the matter over to one of his deputies, diplomatic sources told *The Jerusalem Post*.

On Tuesday, it was Western countries who pressured Mexico not to call for a new vote on the resolution that spoke of the Temple Mount and it’s adjoining Western Wall almost solely by its Muslim names of Al-Haram Al-Sharif and the Buraq Wall.

Western countries, however, are afraid that Mexico’s actions would empower similar calls for new votes on other resolutions that initially passed by consensus, Shama-Hacohen said.

Given the significance of the matter, the Foreign Ministry has allowed Shama-Hacohen and his staff to be active at UNESCO on Tuesday, even though such work is religiously prohibited abroad on the second day of the Succot holiday.

Separately, Mexico has fired its Jewish Ambassador to UNESCO Andrés Roemer for walking out of last Thursday's vote on the Jerusalem resolution, because he disagreed with Mexico's initial decision to support it.