



Paris, 4th of January, 2016

Dear Madame Director General,

Precisely a year ago, I sent you a protest letter, asking you to condemn firmly the *Iranian Holocaust Cartoon Contest* which was planned to be held on April 2015. Unfortunately, today I am writing to you again concerning the next upcoming *Iranian Holocaust Cartoon Contest* to be held in Iran during June 2016.

The abovementioned contest, held several times already, actually enables an open competition for Holocaust deniers. It encourages them to present their vicious outraging "art" which clearly ignores the saddest chapter of human kind. Furthermore, this contest is just an additional manifestation of Holocaust scoffing and denial, in the contest of Iran's vile and malicious rhetoric against International Community values.

Madame Director General, this year, on January 27th, UNESCO will commemorate, as it does every year, the Holocaust remembrance under the theme: *words can kill*. It is naturally understood that the hatred rhetoric coming out of Iran can motivate violence and terrorism. We have seen in the past how verbal violence encourages physical violence and we witnessed it a year ago when several French Jewish citizens were shot to death in the Kosher Supermarket assault. In addition, I take this opportunity to stress out that Holocaust denial is a form of Anti-Semitism and contributes to the spread of this malicious phenomenon.

It is severely unacceptable that Iran, as a Member State of this noble Organization, and a Member State of the Executive Board, derides the immense efforts attributed to this important mission of UNESCO.

Last year, not only Iran organized this shameful contest, it also creates a link between the contest, the bloodshed in Charlie Hebdo and the Kosher Supermarket anti-Semitic attacks in Paris in January 2015. Iran decided to respond to UNESCO's campaign of promoting freedom of expression by encouraging Holocaust denial. Sadly, this year we continue to witness malicious rhetoric, Holocaust denial, regional subversion, global terrorism and gross violation of human rights – all under Rouhani's regime.

According to foreign media sources, the winner in the contest not only will be rewarded financially. What a distorted incentive...

Madame Director General, I urge you to condemn this contest and the Iranian authorities who enable it. It is incumbent to condemn this severe act of Holocaust denial, which badly offends the victims and survivors. It is time for UNESCO to demand accountability from the Iranian regime, with regard to its malicious rhetoric, Holocaust denial and global negative activity.

Sincerely yours,

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Ambassador of Israel to International Organizations

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