

UNESCO to send mission to document Israeli violations in Jerusalem



Ramallah, February 23 (RHC)-- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is planning to send a mission to document Israeli violations in occupied Jerusalem, according to Al-Wattan Voice.

Speaking to Palestine Voice, Mounir Anastas, representative of the Palestinian Authority to the U.N. organization, said that "Israel continues to prevent international UNESCO experts from documenting Israeli violations against holy and archaeological sites in Jerusalem, including Al-Aqsa Mosque."

"Israel has failed to annex East Jerusalem using legal approaches," he said, adding that the country is attempting to alter the "historical and archaeological identity" of the city.

UNESCO diplomats later celebrated a potential breakthrough on longstanding tensions between Israel and Palestine Thursday with Israel's ambassador to the organization saying the mood was "like a wedding" after a rare compromise resolution was signed by member nations regarding the Occupied territory of Palestine.

The document criticizes Israel's actions in Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. However, Israeli Ambassador Carmel Shama-Hacohen told The Associated Press that diplomats agreed to move the most controversial language to a non-binding annex to avoid a contentious vote.

The delegation strategically limited the official "Occupied Palestine" resolution to three short paragraphs, and attached multiple pages of complaints about Israeli policies and Arab claims on Jerusalem in an annex, which is public but not binding. They then agreed to adopt the resolution by consensus instead of a public vote.

Deadly confrontations erupted in Gaza in recent weeks, stirring up problems for the UNESCO negotiations, diplomats told the Associated Press anonymously as they were not authorized to be named publicly while discussing the closed-door negotiations.

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