

U.S. Pleads Re-election to UNESCO Executive Board



Paris, October 19 (RHC)-- U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has pledged to fully restore funding of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in exchange for his country's re-election to the organization's executive board.

In 2013, the U.S. and Israel lost their UNESCO voting rights at the 195-member assembly, two years after suspending their financial contributions to the UN body over Palestine's membership.

Washington is still a member of the executive board that is in charge of overseeing the general management of the agency. The call for re-election, however, comes despite owing hundreds of millions of dollars in unpaid dues.

Kerry also said that the U.S. government would help UNESCO in areas such as restoring of heritage sites destroyed by extremist groups, the safety of journalists and the environment.

The U.S. currently owes \$300 million in arrears to UNESCO. Before stopping its financial support, Washington provided about 22 percent of UNESCO's annual budget.

U.S. law bans it from making contributions to international organizations that recognize Palestine as a state. The Barack Obama administration, however, has unsuccessfully tried to persuade Congress to restore the funding over the past few years.



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