

Paris, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Dear Excellences, Dear Colleagues,

I would like to share with you a copy of the letter that was sent yesterday to the Director General by the Permanent Delegation of Israel to UNESCO (attached hereby).

In this letter we convey our dismay and regrets over UNESCO'S one-sided statement of last week (UNESCO Press Release No. 2014-84), regrets emanating from the utter absence of the context.

Sincerely yours,



Nimrod BARKAN

Ambassador of Israel to International Organizations

Paris, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Dear Madame Director General,

I would like to convey to you my dismay and regrets over your one-sided statement of last week (UNESCO Press Release No. 2014-84).

Madame Director General, while Israel clearly regrets the killing of media workers and pay great attention to the freedom of the press, our regrets emanate from the utter absence of the context.

During the last fourteen days, due to massive rocket attacks by Hamas from Gaza, any activity in dozens of schools, kindergartens and summer camps in Israel has been forbidden. Final matriculations exams in many high-schools were postponed while in others, the exams had to take place in bomb shelters. In addition, cultural and educational activities have been constantly interrupted by sirens, giving innocent citizens, small children and elderly, fifteen seconds to find shelter. Sadly, a whole generation of Israeli children and teenagers is growing up in the shadow of terrorist threat. Fortunately, the Iron Dome defense prevented disasters.

UNESCO claims to do its utmost efforts in order to ensure a safe access to education for students and children all over the world and the basic human right to quality education. These rights are being denied daily by the Hamas terrorist attack, still UNESCO is silent.

Hamas also uses schools as bases in order to store and shoot rockets and its actions in Gaza clearly undermine UNESCO's values and objectives.

Regretfully you have failed to reflect this in your official Press Releases.

Moreover, Madame Director General, as you surely know, some of the Hamas missiles have a range of 160 km and threaten vast areas of civilian population where many museums and UNESCO World Heritage Sites are located (such as Tel-

Aviv, Haifa and Mount Carmel, Jerusalem, Be'er-Sheva and Acre). Do you really need to wait for historical monuments, official World Heritage Sites and museums to be destroyed in order to condemn this shameful terrorist attack of Hamas?

I am genuinely concerned that your silence undermines the Organization's mandate and the protection of such sites.

UNESCO Assistant Director General for Education (ADG/ED) paid a visit to Yad-Vashem center and museum in Jerusalem last week. Unfortunately, he had to experience this awful feeling of being under attack where he had few seconds to reach to a safe place, when the alarming sirens rang. I suggest you to ask him how he felt and this might give you the right perspectives of what has been happening in Israel for years.

Moreover, as you are well aware, Israel's willingness for a cease fire was dismissed by the Hamas that continues to rocket cultural institutes, schools, universities, higher-educations institutes and World Heritage Sites – all of them lie within UNESCO's purview.

Israel expects UNESCO to responsibly assume its mandate to promote and protect education, sciences and culture as well as freedom of expression, and refrain from distortion.

Sincerely yours,



Nimrod BARKAN  
Ambassador of Israel to International Organizations

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