

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 21, 2016

Chairman Rev. Thomas J. Reese
United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
732 N. Capitol Street, N.W., Suite A714
Washington, D.C. 20401

Dear Chairman Reese:

We write to urge the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) to take a firm public stand against a controversial revisionist resolution passed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This resolution, Item 25 of the Executive Board's 200th session, titled "Occupied Palestine," contemptibly denies Jewish and Christian ties to the Old City of Jerusalem and its holiest sites, the Temple Mount and the Western Wall.

The State Department made its disapproval clear last week, when spokesman Mark Toner affirmed that such actions and resolutions "do nothing to advance constructive results on the ground. And we don't believe they should be adopted."

UNESCO's very own Director-General, Irina Bokova, in condemning the action of her member states, said "the heritage of Jerusalem is indivisible" and "to deny, conceal, or erase any of the Jewish, Christian, or Muslim traditions undermines the integrity of the site."

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also rejected the resolution, saying "any perceived undertaking to repudiate the undeniable common reference for these sites does not serve the interests of peace and will only feed violence and radicalism."

Your commission, tasked with the critical issue of defending the freedom of religion, can send a strong message by taking a firm stand against such bigoted resolutions. We hope you will join the many Members of Congress, from both parties, in speaking out against Item 25.

Sincerely,


PETER J. ROSKAM
Member of Congress


TED LIEU
Member of Congress