



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: October 18, 2016
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: Cynthia Owens, Senior Management Analyst
Subject: Request by Mayor Mirisch to Consider a Resolution of the City Council to Oppose the Recent United Nations Resolution to Deny Jewish Historical and Religious Claims to Temple Mount and the Western Wall.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Beverly Hills and the State of Israel jointly entered into a declaration on November 10, 2015 to promote and strengthen bilateral collaboration, economic development, enhance cultural relationships, and educational opportunities. The joint declaration promotes mutual cooperation, understanding and friendships by encouraging ad hoc task forces, trade delegations and professional exchanges.

In 2015, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar and Sudan submitted a proposed resolution to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to claim Temple Mount in Israel as sacred only to Muslims. The proposal has been advanced by the Palestinians in order to remove Jewish and Israeli history from holy sites situated in Israel.

On October 13, 2016, UNESCO approved a draft resolution that denies Jewish historical and religious claims to Temple Mount and the Western Wall. The resolution does acknowledge the religious significance of Jerusalem to Christianity, Judaism and Islam; however, it claims Temple Mount as sacred only to Muslims. The draft resolution has been referred to UNESCO's executive board for formal approval which is anticipated to occur the week of October 17, 2016.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Mirisch is requesting City Council consider adopting a resolution opposing the draft resolution of UNESCO which denies any Jewish historical and religious claims to Temple Mount and the Western Wall. The Western Wall is the holiest site where Jews can pray and is situated at the bottom of Temple Mount which is Judaism's holiest site.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no known fiscal impacts at this time.

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RECOMMENDATION

Staff is seeking direction from the City Council on this request. After discussion, if the Council wishes to pursue this request, Staff can draft a Resolution in opposition to the UNESCO resolution regarding Temple Mount.

Cheryl Friedling,
Deputy City Manager
Approved By

