



## Israel Advocacy News Alert Congregation L'Dor V'Dor



**69 years after joining, Israel formally leaves UNESCO;  
so, too, does the US**

*UN cultural agency's efforts to convince Washington and Jerusalem fail; 'we aren't going to be a member of an organization that deliberately acts against us,' Israeli envoy says—*

As the new year began, Israel officially left the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, despite recent efforts by the agency's head to combat its politicization and alleged anti-Israel bias.

The withdrawal went into effect at midnight Paris time (1 a.m. in Israel). The US departure also took effect at the same time.

“UNESCO is a body that continually rewrites history, including by erasing the Jewish connection to Jerusalem,” Israel's Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon told *The Times of Israel* on Monday.

“It is corrupted and manipulated by Israel's enemies, and continually singles out the only Jewish state for condemnation. We are not going to be a member of an organization that deliberately acts against us.”

In October 2017, mere days after the US administration announced its withdrawal from UNESCO due to, among other things, its alleged obsession with Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that he was following the US lead.

“We hope that the organization will change its ways but we are not pinning hopes on this; therefore, my directive to leave the organization stands and we will move forward to carry it out,” he declared a few days later.

Israel had joined UNESCO on September 16, 1949, and is home to six UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including Masada, the Old City of Acre, the Bahai Temples in Haifa and the “White City” of Tel Aviv. These sites will remain on the list, a spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem said.

*Source: Excerpt from the Daily Alert, 01/01/19;  
Times of Israel, 01/01/19*

## Israel's population 8.972m on eve of 2019

On December 31, 2018, the population of Israel is estimated at 8.972 million, the Central Bureau of Statistics reports. Of this number, 6.668 million are Jews (74.3%), 1.878 million are Arabs (20.9%) and 426,000 are classified as "others"(4.8%).

The population in Israel grew during 2018 by 2%. Natural increase accounted for 81% of the growth and 19% was accounted for by immigration. 40,000 new immigrants arrived in Israel during 2018 while 7,000 Israelis stayed abroad for more than a year. Some 185,000 babies were born during the year (74.4% Jews, 22.8% Arabs, and 2.8% others) and 45,000 people died in 2018.

*Source: The Daily Alert, 01/01/19;  
GLOBES, 12/31/18*

## Israeli startups raised over \$400m in December

The country's startups have raised well over \$6 billion in 2018 - a new record.

Israeli startups raised over \$400 million in December, according to press releases issued by companies that completed financing rounds. The figure may be more as some companies prefer not to publicize the investments they have received.

This sum can be added to the \$4.5 billion that Israeli startups raised in the first nine months of 2018, according to IVC-ZAG as well as the estimated \$1.2 billion raised in October and November. This means that the country's startups have raised a record \$6.1 billion since the start of 2018, easily surpassing last year's record of \$5.24 billion.

Most of the sum in December was raised in large financing rounds led by medical cannabis smart inhaler company Syqe Medical, which raised \$50 million and public transport optimization algorithm company Optibus, which raised \$40 million. Conversation intelligence platform Chorus.ai raised \$33 million, heart failure treatment company WhiteSwell raised \$30 million, Sight Diagnostics raised \$28 million, and cybersecurity company Avanan and primary care app company K Health each raised \$25 million.

*Source: The Daily Alert, 01/01/19;  
GLOBES, 01/01/19*

**Brazil applauds Netanyahu-Bolsonaro bromance,  
new ties with Jewish state**

RIO DE JANEIRO (JTA) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gained pop star status among Brazilians during a five-day visit to their country to attend the inauguration of the new president, Jair Bolsonaro.

Brazil's most influential primetime newscasts, Jornal Nacional and Fantastico, dedicated several minutes to coverage of the first sitting Israeli prime minister to visit Brazil.

The warm feelings between Israel's right-wing prime minister and Brazil's most right-wing president in three decades played out in public events and on social media. They contrasted with the previous 16 years of tension between the two countries' under Brazil's left-wing regimes.

"This visit is unique, historical, a turnover in the relationship between Israel and Brazil. It's a great start of year 2019," Israel's ambassador to Brazil, Yossi Shelley, told JTA.

"Bibi crowns Bolsonaro's once-in-a-lifetime moment," Israel's honorary consul, Osias Wurman, told JTA to explain Netanyahu's unexpected popularity.

This city was the starting point for Netanyahu along with his wife, Sara, and their son, Yair. After landing, the prime minister headed straight to the Copacabana fort, where he was surprised to be awarded the National Order of the Southern Cross, Brazil's highest national honor for high-ranking guests, by Bolsonaro.

"We will be starting a difficult government from January. In order to overcome the obstacles, we'll need good allies, good friends, good brothers. Like Benjamin Netanyahu," Bolsonaro said about the only foreign leader he met prior to being sworn in.

Bolsonaro also joined Netanyahu at a Dec. 28 ceremony at the Kehilat Yaacov synagogue in the heart of Copacabana, Rio's most heavily Jewish neighborhood. Some 500 members of the 30,000-strong Jewish community there attended the ceremony at the Orthodox synagogue, shouting "mito" (Portuguese for myth or legend) at Bolsonaro, and Netanyahu's nickname, "Bibi."

"We can't understand that we had to wait over 70 years for an Israeli prime minister to visit Brazil," Netanyahu said in Hebrew, calling Bolsonaro "yedidi," my friend, and "mitos." "It's not just friendship, not a pact of interest, it's also a pact of brothers."

*Source: Excerpt from the Daily Alert, 01/03/19;  
JTA, 01/02/19*



“Israel Advocacy” is defined as making the case for Israel in the broadest sense in order to support Israel as the democratic nation-state of the Jewish people, with the absolute right to live in peace and security as a member of the community of nations.

Through lectures, films, speakers and other programs, Israel Advocacy engages the community and synagogue in activities that build a positive relationship with Israel. This is accomplished by educating about Israel and promoting civil dialogue among the constituents whose views fall within the broad spectrum of viewpoints based on support for Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. This means that while we agree on the main principles of making the case for Israel and Zionism, we don't have to accept every policy of the Israeli government or defend every official in every case.

## **Connect With Israel**

*Links to English/Israel Newspapers*

*[Haaretz - http://www.haaretz.com/](http://www.haaretz.com/)*

*[The Jerusalem Post - http://www.jpost.com/](http://www.jpost.com/)*

*[The Times Of Israel - http://www.timesofisrael.com/](http://www.timesofisrael.com/)*

*[Honest Reporting - www.honestreporting.com/](http://www.honestreporting.com/)*

## **DAILY ALERT**

*News About Israel From Around The World Gathered*

*By The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations*

*[Daily Alert - www.dailyalert.org](http://www.dailyalert.org)*

**American Zionist Movement and MERCAZ  
Organizations To Help Us Connect  
To The Modern State Of Israel and Its People**