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November 1, 2011

Middle East News: World Press Roundup

NEWS: Palestine's UNESCO membership sets off a confrontation over US funding, and there are concerns it could have significant costs to Palestinians as well. Palestine will seek world heritage status for various sites in the occupied territories. The US has initiated an initial cut off of funding to UNESCO. The CSM looks at ramifications for four key players. Palestinians now may try to join 16 other multilateral agencies. Israeli forces demolish 5 Palestinian homes in occupied East Jerusalem. A prominent Israeli NGO says Israel is forcing Palestinians out of Jerusalem. Egypt says Israel has agreed to delay further military actions in Gaza. Bosnia says its federation cannot agree on the Palestinian UN membership application and will abstain, meaning a Security Council majority in favor is virtually impossible. COMMENTARY: Judge Goldstone says Israel is not an 'apartheid state.' Dimi Reider says freedom of speech is under attack in Israel. Akiva Eldar says PM Netanyahu is pursuing a policy of acquisition of territory by force. Amos Harel says Israel's military now prefers its soldiers to be killed rather than captured. Gershon Baskin says would be disastrous for the US to cut off all aid to the PA except security support. Susan Hattis Rolef says Israelis need to decide what they mean by 'Jewish state.' The Daily Star says it's high time Palestine was admitted to UNESCO. Yossi Alpher says the latest Quartet initiative is pointless and depressing. Ghassan Khatib says Israel's new settlement construction plans are a direct challenge to the authority of the Quartet. Bernard Avishai says anyone who thinks boycotts are bad should be disturbed by the Israeli reaction to Palestine's UNESCO membership.

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UNESCO Palestine decision sets off U.S.-U.N. confrontation

Article Author(s): Edmund Sanders

Media Outlet: The Los Angeles Times

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-unesco-palestinians-20111101...> [6]

Reporting from Jerusalem and Washington? A decision by the United Nations' cultural organization to admit Palestine as a member state set off a confrontation between the U.S. and the U.N., threatening to strip Washington of influence in several key international agencies while cutting off a major source of contributions to the world body.

Palestinian Membership in Unesco Comes at a Price as U.S. Cuts Off Funding

Article Author(s): Flavia Krause-Jackson

Media Outlet: Bloomberg

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-11-01/palestinians-may-lose-from-unesco-vote....> [7]

Acceptance into the UN cultural agency Unesco, best known for its designation of ?world heritage? sites, hasn?t brought the Palestinians any closer to full membership in the United Nations itself.

If anything, the victory has come at a price.

A day after Palestine gained full membership in the UN group with 107 votes in favor and 14 against, the U.S. has retaliated by cutting off funding that supplies almost a quarter of the agency?s budget. Moreover, swing votes the Palestinians need to bolster their support on the Security Council for full UN membership have evaporated.

Palestinians to push heritage agenda at UNESCO

Media Outlet: Reuters

Date: October 10, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4133390,00.html> [8]

The Palestinians will seek World Heritage status for the birthplace of Jesus once the UN cultural agency admits them as a full member, and will then nominate other sites in the West

Bank for the same standing, an official said.

Hamdan Taha, a Palestinian Authority minister who deals with antiquities and culture, said UNESCO membership was the Palestinians' natural right. He described the objections of some governments to the move, including the United States, as "regrettable."

U.S. cuts off UNESCO funding after Palestinian vote

Media Outlet: Reuters

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/us-cuts-off-unesco-funding-after-palestinian-...> [9]

The United States said on Monday it had stopped funding UNESCO, the U.N. cultural agency, following its vote to grant the Palestinians full membership.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters the United States had no choice but to halt funding because of longstanding U.S. law, saying Washington would not make a planned \$60 million transfer that was due in November.

Palestinian UNESCO membership: What it means for 4 key players

Article Author(s): Ariel Zirulnick

Media Outlet: The Christian Science Monitor

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/1031/Palestinian-UNESCO-membersh...> [10]

Practically speaking, UNESCO membership for Palestine doesn't bring it any closer to actual statehood. But with the Palestinians' bid for full UN membership stalled because of an almost-certain US veto on the United Nations Security Council, the Palestinian Authority has opted to move forward by pushing for membership at individual UN agencies, such as UNESCO, the Associated Press reports.

Palestinians aim to join 16 other UN agencies

Article Author(s): Elior Levy

Media Outlet: Ynetnews

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4142458,00.html> [11]

The Palestinian Authority's admittance to UNESCO as a full member is an achievement Israel should be pleased with ? or at least that's what Chief Palestinian Negotiator Saeb Erekat thinks.

"This is a victory for peace and a victory for the human race," he stressed while threatening: "Israel might find itself as the only authority from the Jordan River and to the sea". Palestinian officials have claimed that this is just the beginning.

Israel demolishes Palestinian house in Jerusalem

Media Outlet: Ma'an News Agency

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=434090> [12]

Israeli forces on Monday demolished five homes belonging to Palestinians in East Jerusalem, locals said.

The demolitions, in Khan al-Ahmar near the illegal Israeli settlement Maale Adumin, displaced 71 people, including 60 children, according to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions.

ICAHD, a prominent Israeli non-governmental organization, said Monday that Israel was forcing Palestinians out of East Jerusalem as part of a deliberate policy that might constitute a war crime.

Israel forcing Palestinians out of East Jerusalem-NGO

Article Author(s): Crispian Balmer

Media Outlet: Reuters

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/israel-forcing-palestinians-out-of-east-jerus...> [13]

Israel is forcing Palestinians out of East Jerusalem as part of a deliberate policy that might constitute a war crime, a prominent Israeli non-governmental organisation said on Monday, a charge rejected by Jerusalem's mayor.

The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) has presented the United Nations with its findings and demanded an inquiry, saying Israel targeted Palestinians by demolishing homes, revoking residency and eroding quality of life.

Egypt: Israel delaying expanding Gaza offensive

Article Author(s): Ibrahim Barzak

Media Outlet: The Statesman

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.statesman.com/news/nation/egypt-israel-delaying-expanding-gaza-offens...> [14]

An Egyptian official said Tuesday that Israel has agreed to briefly delay expanding its military operations in the Gaza Strip to give Egypt time to try to persuade Palestinian militant factions to halt rocket fire on southern Israel.

Israeli aircraft have targeted rocket squads in Gaza in recent days, but the Egyptian official says Israel has also planned a wider operation. The official says Egypt asked for 24 hours to try to bring all factions into an informal cease-fire and Israel agreed to give Cairo until around midnight Tuesday.

Bosnia stalemate may signify end to Palestine vote

Article Author(s): Aida Cerkez

Media Outlet: Google News

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s):

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iVPcJscvoGRLo1umvf6CXBDYF5Ow?d...> [15]

Palestinian hopes of rallying the required nine vote majority in a U.N. Security Council vote on Palestinian statehood suffered a major blow Monday with a Bosnian presidential adviser saying the country will be forced to abstain.

Palestinian officials have said they already have eight votes, and had counted heavily on Bosnia to give them the ninth.

Israel and the Apartheid Slander

Article Author(s): Richard Goldstone

Media Outlet: The New York Times

Article Type: Opinion

Date: October 31, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/01/opinion/israel-and-the-apartheid-slander.html?...> [16]

THE Palestinian Authority's request for full United Nations membership has put hope for any

two-state solution under increasing pressure. The need for reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians has never been greater. So it is important to separate legitimate criticism of Israel from assaults that aim to isolate, demonize and delegitimize it.

In Israel, Press Freedom Is Under Attack

Article Author(s): Dimi Reider

Media Outlet: The New York Times

Article Type: Opinion

Date: October 31, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/01/opinion/in-israel-press-freedom-is-under-attac...> [17]

ON Sunday, the Tel Aviv District Court sentenced Anat Kamm, a 24-year-old journalist and former soldier, to four and a half years in prison for leaking documents containing evidence of what she suspected might be war crimes committed by her commanders.

Uri Blau, a prominent Israeli investigative reporter at Haaretz who received the documents from Ms. Kamm, is now waiting to hear whether the attorney general will indict him.

Netanyahu's ongoing acquisition of lands by force

Article Author(s): Akiva Eldar

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Article Type: Opinion

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/netanyahu-s-ongoing-acquisition-of...> [18]

And now for the million-shekel question on the game show, "1 vs. 100:" Which of the three leaders said, "Most of the UN member-states originate from conflicts, but I don't believe in acquiring lands by force"? Was it Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin or Benjamin Netanyahu?

After Shalit, some IDF officers see dead soldier as better than abducted

Article Author(s): Amos Harel

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Article Type: Analysis

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/after-shalit-some-idf-officers-see-dea...> [19]

Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Benny Gantz reiterated on Monday that the so-called Hannibal Protocol, designed to prevent soldiers from being abducted, does not allow for a soldier to be killed in order to prevent his abduction. Gantz was addressing the IDF's operations forum, which includes combat unit commanders at the rank of lieutenant colonel and above. Much of the meeting was devoted to discussing the lessons of the Gilad Shalit episode.

Encountering Peace: Unintended consequences

Article Author(s): Gershon Baskin

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Article Type: Opinion

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Article.aspx?id=243936> [20]

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and the entire PLO leadership decided to take the Palestinian issue back to the United Nations. This was not an easy or a hasty decision. It was taken with a great deal of deliberation and after carefully weighing all of the possible consequences.

Israel ? Jewish state or state of the Jewish people?

Article Author(s): Susan Hattis Rolef

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Article Type: Opinion

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-EdContributors/Article.aspx?id=243939> [21]

The winter session of the Knesset opened Monday. One of the items on the agenda is a bill initiated by MK Avi Dichter (Kadima) and cosigned by another 39 MKs, entitled ?Basic Law: Israel ? The National State of the Jewish People.?

It?s about time

Media Outlet: The Daily Star

Article Type: Editorial

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2011/Nov-01/152731-its-about-time....> [22]

The state of Palestine finally exists ? in the eyes of UNESCO, the United Nations body responsible for science, education and culture.

Anyone with knowledge of how the U.N. works could remark that in procedural terms, the move is not particularly significant Representatives of Palestine regularly attend such bodies? meetings. The website of the U.N. organization ESCWA, for example, lists Palestine as one of the ?country? members.

Pointless and depressing

Article Author(s): Yossi Alpher

Media Outlet: Bitterlemons

Article Type: Opinion

Date: October 31, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.bitterlemons.org/inside.php?id=155> [23]

Last week, representatives of the Quartet met with Israeli and Palestinian negotiators and declared they had extracted a commitment from both sides to submit their final status negotiating positions on borders and security within three months. Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat proceeded to deny any such Palestinian commitment, while Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Mahmoud Abbas intimated he might soon consider dissolving the Palestinian Authority.

A serious challenge

Article Author(s): Ghassan Khatib

Media Outlet: Bitterlemons

Article Type: Opinion

Date: October 31, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.bitterlemons.org/inside.php?id=156> [24]

One of the motives behind the Palestinian appeal to the United Nations is to gradually escape the United States' monopoly over mediation in the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis, seeking instead an even-handed mediation that is sensitive to the position of the international community, international law and the agreed-upon peace process terms of reference, like the roadmap.

UNESCO: Boycott For Boycott?

Article Author(s): Bernard Avishai

Media Outlet: Talking Points Memo

Article Type: Blog

Date: November 1, 2011

Source Link(s):

http://tpmcafe.talkingpointsmemo.com/2011/11/01/unesco_boycott_for_boycott/ [25]

The admission of the Palestinian Authority into UNESCO has occasioned a fuss about the American response, the automatic cutting of \$70 million in funding to the organization, triggered by existing, AIPAC-inspired Congressional legislation. (M.J. Rosenberg's good column on the subject here.)

But the thing nobody seems able to explain is what possible interest Israel, or even the Netanyahu government, has in keeping Palestinians out of an organization that focuses on the the sharing of scientific information and universal artistic and cultural values?

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