

## Bibi Rejects Obama's 'UN Flag at Kotel'; Star of David to Remain

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Netanyahu: United Jerusalem forever  
Israel News Photo: Flash

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu vowed at the Mercaz HaRav yeshiva in Jerusalem Thursday night that the Israeli flag will continue to fly over the Western Wall (Kotel). The first prime minister in years to appear at the venerable yeshiva on Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day), he ignored U.S. President Barack Obama's apparent trial balloon that he wants to see the United Nations flag fly over the Old City holy sites.

Jordan's King Abdullah II said the president put forward the proposal during his visit to the White House last month.

Prime Minister Netanyahu declared, "The flag that flies over the Kotel is the Israeli flag... Our holy places, the Temple Mount -- will remain under Israeli sovereignty forever."

Between 1949 and 1967, the religious sites in the City, as well as all of Judea and Samaria, had been under the control of Jordan, which forbid entry of Jews to the Western Wall (Kotel) and other holy places, as well as barring Christians from churches. Israel immediately opened all holy sites to all religions after the entire city was re-united in 1967, returning the Old City to Israeli sovereignty after nearly 2,000 years.

In his short but enthusiastic speech at the yeshiva, where an Arab terrorist slaughtered eight young students slightly more than a year ago, Prime Minister Netanyahu repeated his "Undivided Jerusalem" message.

The packed study hall of the yeshiva interrupted Prime Minister Netanyahu's short

speech several times with applause. The first clap of hands was in response to the statement that Israel's capital "never will be divided again." Jerusalem Day marks the day in the Six Day War upon which the Israel Defense Forces liberated the eastern neighborhoods of Jerusalem from Jordanian rule.

In an attempt to appeal to the national-religious community after years of neglect from a prime minister, Netanyahu said, "It is important for me to stay in warm communication with you. The connection with Jerusalem unites all sectors of the people, secular and religious, as one."

Former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert had kept a very close relation with Yeshivat Mercaz HaRav when he was mayor of Jerusalem and attended annual Jerusalem Day ceremonies there, but he became more distant from religious institutions after he followed former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to his new Kadima party.

Prime Minister Netanyahu's vow on Jerusalem was made in the presence of Israel's two chief rabbis, Likud Knesset Member and former IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Yaalon, and Jewish Home party chairman MK Rabbi Daniel Herszkowitz.

It was the second time during the day he promised to keep the city united, having stated earlier in the day that "Jerusalem was always ours, will always be ours, and will never again be divided." His speech was delivered at Ammunition Hill in memory of soldiers who fell in the Six-Day War in 1967.

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