



UNESCO, the United Nations cultural agency, accepted Palestine as a full member on Monday, angering the United States, which announced that it would cut off funding to the international body.

The 107-14 vote, with 52 abstentions, was the first tangible result of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' application in September for U.N. membership with borders that include the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Palestinians hope that their success in achieving membership in UNESCO will be a springboard to other international bodies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organization.

The lopsided vote came even though the United States, which funds 22 percent of UNESCO's budget, had warned that U.S. law required it to eliminate its contribution if Palestinian membership were granted. A \$60 million contribution scheduled for November won't be made, State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said in Washington.

Nuland called the vote "regrettable" and "premature." She echoed the long-standing U.S. position that recognition of a Palestinian state outside direct negotiations with Israel hurts efforts for a comprehensive peace between Israel and Palestinians.

Democrats and Republicans in Washington also criticized the decision. U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla., the chair of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, called the vote "reckless," "anti-Israel" and "anti-peace."

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