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THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Netanyahu downplays right-wing anti-Semitism, contradicting Israeli study

PM insists Jew hatred on the 'extreme left' and among Muslims is the more pertinent threat, despite government report stating far-right attacks on the rise

By TOI STAFF
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Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (C), Cabinet Secretary Tzachi Braverman (R) and Tourism Minister Yariv Levin (L) attend the weekly cabinet meeting at prime minister's office in Jerusalem on January 27, 2019. (ABIR SULTAN / POOL / AFP)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday called for a fight against rising Muslim and left-wing anti-Semitism in Europe, hours after the government published a report that said the far-right posed the greatest threat to Jews on the continent.

Speaking at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting on International Holocaust Memorial Day, Netanyahu said that right-wing anti-Semitism in Europe was well established, but that a recent rise in anti-Zionism was driving anti-Jewish and anti-Israel sentiment across the continent.



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“On Friday, vandals **smashed the monument** to the Jews of Thessaloniki who perished in the Holocaust. I strongly condemn this, and call on the international community to act against emerging anti-Semitism, especially the emerging anti-Semitism in Europe,” the prime minister said, according to remarks released by his office.

“Anti-Semitism from the right is not a new phenomenon there. What is new in Europe is the combination of Islamic anti-Semitism and the anti-Semitism of the extreme left, which includes anti-Zionism, such as has recently occurred in Great Britain and in Ireland,” he said. “What a disgrace.”

Britain’s Labour Party has faced multiple accusations of anti-Semitism on the part of members and representatives, as well as leader Jeremy Corbyn.



The vandalized Jewish cemetery monument in Thessaloniki, (Twitter)

Last week, the Foreign Ministry reprimanded Ireland’s envoy to Israel following the advancement of a “**scandalous**” bill criminalizing Israeli products from areas captured by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War.

The prime minister’s remarks were at odds with a **report** on anti-Semitism



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released by the Diaspora Affairs Ministry earlier on Sunday, which showed a worldwide increase in attacks against Jews last year, and the highest number of fatalities in anti-Semitic attacks around the world in 25 years.

“In contrast to previous years, when Islamist anti-Semitism was the main and most dangerous threat to Jewish communities, in 2018 there has been a turnaround and now anti-Semitic incidents emanating from the far-right are the main and most dangerous threat to Jewish communities, especially in the United States and Europe,” the report said.

The physical violence in 2018 was led by neo-Nazis and white supremacists, the ministry added.

Netanyahu, who also holds the position of foreign minister, has come under criticism for developing ties with far-right European governments and parties.



Hundreds of white nationalists, neo-Nazis and members of the 'alt-right' march during the Unite the Right rally August 12, 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

Last year, Conference of European Rabbis president Pinchas Goldschmidt called on Israel to end its engagement with far-right parties





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in Europe, warning lawmakers at a meeting at the Knesset that cozying up to nationalist groups in Europe was putting local Jewish communities at risk.

“It is not worth a short-term endorsement or for Israel to receive political support, only to put the Jewish community at risk,” Goldschmidt said.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-downplays-right-wing-anti-semitism-contradicting-israeli-study/>

