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## Belgian Jews, Muslims Cite Religious Freedom in Challenging Shechita Bans in Court

By: Staff Reporter



A hearing was held on Thursday at the Constitutional Court of Belgium in a lawsuit challenging prohibitions on the ritual slaughter of animals in two regions of the Western European nation. (Illustrative)

A hearing was held on Thursday at the Constitutional Court of Belgium in a lawsuit challenging prohibitions on the ritual slaughter of animals in two regions of the Western European nation.

One shechita ban was implemented in Flanders earlier this month and another is set to go into effect in Wallonia this summer.

Lawsuits against the bans have been filed by the Belgian Federation of Jewish Organizations (CCOJB), in cooperation with The Lawfare Project think tank, and the Coordinating Council of Islamic

Institutions in Belgium.

The plaintiffs argue that the bans violate religious freedoms guaranteed by the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Yohan Benizri — the president of the CCOJB — stated, "We will carry on fighting for our religious freedom using every legal means at our disposal. Belgium is our home, but the message sent by banning kosher slaughter is that we are not welcome in our own country. That should be a concern not just for Jews or Muslims but for all who value living in democratic societies in which the rights and freedoms of minorities are safeguarded."

Brooke Goldstein — the executive director of The Lawfare Project — said, "Belgian Jews have not given up their fight against this assault on their religious freedom and nor have we. We remain hopeful that Belgium's courts will recognize it for what it is — discrimination



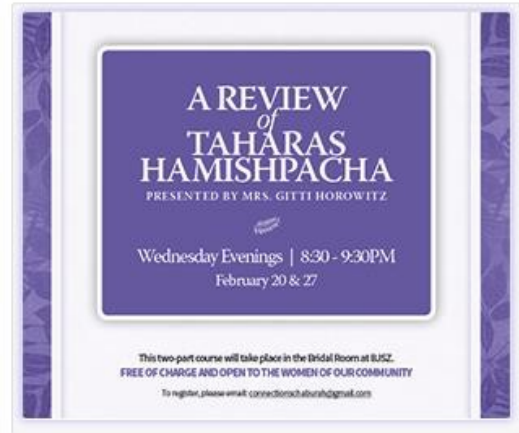


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and hostility against minority faith communities — and act accordingly.”

Last month, Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt — the president of the Conference of European Rabbis — expressed alarm about the shechita bans, calling them an “affront to the European values we all hold so dear.”



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