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Top yeshiva in Moscow is set alight before start of the seder



DAMAGE: The burned-out storeroom which contained meat for Pesach is inspected after the blaze. While Russia has a long history of antisemitism, it has noticeably declined under Russian leader Vladimir Putin

MOSCOW'S biggest yeshiva was set alight and swastikas painted on the front of the building as guests gathered for a seder.

About 60 were inside Torat Chaim yeshiva as the fire began in a meat storage area.

Jewish organisations from across the globe have condemned Friday's arson attack.

A spokesman for Moscow's Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, Olga Esaulova, said: "Over the next two days, we will not be able to investigate because of Pesach. The situation is completely entrusted to law enforcement agencies,

which we hope will be able to find the perpetrators."

World Jewish Congress chief executive Robert Singer expressed "anger and horror".

"The entire international Jewish community is horrified by this vicious attack by what appears to be neo-Nazi elements," he said.

"We are grateful that no one was injured. I wish the teachers and students at the Torat Chaim yeshiva a Passover free of further violence."

America's Anti-Defamation League chief executive Jonathan Greenblatt called the incident "despicable".

"We hope the authorities will

ensure the community and its institutions are safe," he said.

Yaakov Hagoel, the World Zionist Organisation's vice-chairman, said that antisemitic arsonists "do not want to allow Diaspora Jews true freedom".

He added: "This is another red light in the righteous fight in the war against antisemitism and terror in Europe."

"I call on Russia's President Vladimir Putin — a true friend of the State of Israel — to help and protect the Jews in his country so that they are able to proudly fulfill the holiday's commandments, and in general are able to fulfill the other commandments without fear."

