



Publication: Jewish Tribune  
Date: 04.09.19



# Shechita ban in Belgium extended

AD Kahn

While a ban on shechita has already been in place in the region of Flanders for some months, this week it took effect in the French-speaking Wallonia area of the country.

Belgium is a Federation made up of three sectors, Flanders, Walloon or Wallonia and the capital of Brussels. Flanders has a population of 6 million people while Wallonia has a population of 3.8 million. Brussels, which is the smallest region existing just around the capital city has 1 million residents.

Many Muslims feel the laws are a result of Islamophobia rather than a concern for animal rights. For Jews, they are also an uncomfortable reminder of a darker period in European history. In 1933, one of the first laws the Nazis enacted was a ban on kosher

animal slaughter.

There are around 500,000 Muslims and 30,000 Jews in Belgium.

Antwerp is home to 60 percent of the country's Jews, one of the largest Jewish Orthodox populations in Europe.

The Head of the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt said: "The attack on religious freedom in the European capital must be of concern to European leadership. The European capital has once again painted a dark stain on the darkening skies of Europe. Jews gave their lives in the past during the dark days of history in order to eat kosher food and to circumcise their children. Only 75 years have passed since the Third Reich in its most racist and violent fashion prohibited, in the name of humanity, the Jewish laws of ritual slaughter.



They then slaughtered millions of Jews and decimated Europe. We will fight with every weapon that we have in our arsenal and together with the Jewish community of Belgium and Europe we will fight these despicable decisions."

The Chief Rabbi of Brussels Rabbi Avraham Gigi also responded to the implementation of the law. "In the region of Brussels, which is the most important of the three regions from a national standpoint, we see forces organizing in order to pass a similar law to the one that was just implemented. We are worried about the effect that this will have on the rest of Europe. We held elections in Brussels only three months ago and we hope that those elected will have an effect on the outcome of this law. We need to remember that Brussels is the de facto capital of the European Union and the biggest metropolis in Belgium."

