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European rabbis warn social media 'causing chaos' in hate crime battle

Leading faith figures say recent antisemitic attacks have been 'digitally inspired' with sites like Facebook and Twitter giving assailants 'strength and power'

By **JEWISH NEWS REPORTER**
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Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the Conference of European Rabbis (CER), issued the warning at the Munich Security Conference, during a CER-sponsored debate about social media companies and radicalisation.

A senior European rabbi has said the power given to people on the fringes of society by social media companies was “causing chaos”, during a debate about hate crime.





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Goldschmidt said the attack on a synagogue in the German city of Halle in October last year was “digitally inspired,” as was the attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, as he urged the tech giants to clamp down.

“The strength and power given by social media to people on the margins of society is causing chaos,” he said. “Last year, 2019, there were quite a few attacks against houses of worship — mosques, synagogues and churches.”

He was speaking alongside Maram Stern, vice-president of World Jewish Congress Maram Stern, and both said the tech giants were failing to deal with forms of racist hatred and the dissemination of extremist views across their platforms.



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CER-sponsored debate about social media companies and radicalisation, at the Munich Security Conference, during a

Alex Samos, the former chief security officer at Facebook, said policing free speech was a tricky area, in part because the platform included private messaging.

He said: "I don't think that anybody here would say that Deutsche Telekom should listen in to every phone call in Germany, and if you say something racist someone pops in and tells you you're wrong."

However Goldschmidt argued that private companies "definitely have the ability and the right to limit speech," while German Jewish leader Michel Friedman wondered why governments did not intervene on hate crime as they do cyber-crime.

<https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/european-rabbis-warn-social-media-causing-chaos-in-hate-crime-battle/>

