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# Lapid Reprimands Belgian Ambassador Over Antisemitic Carnival



Yair Lapid of the Blue and White Party. Photo: Adi Cohen Zedek via Wikimedia Commons.

*JNS.org* – Blue and White No. 2 MK Yair Lapid said on Sunday that he had reprimanded Belgian Ambassador to Israel Olivier Belle regarding an antisemitic parade in Belgium over the weekend.

“I had a long and very angry conversation” with the Belgian ambassador, Lapid told *i24 News* and *Israel Hayom* in an interview. “I told him that if there was a possibility of pressing charges in Belgium I will do it myself, as an Israeli politician but not only—also as the son of a Holocaust survivor.”





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The carnival, in the Belgian city of Aalst, was removed from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) heritage list after antisemitic symbols were used in last year's parade, but in this year's event Jews were targeted once again.

"Even though Aalst Carnival is much more than that, these facts detract from our values and reputation of our country," Belgian Prime Minister Sophie Wilmès said in a statement, according to the *AP*. "Belgium is a state of law. It is for the Justice Department and concerned authorities to see if the events during Carnival are in contravention of the law."

One group on Sunday dressed up like insects, sporting the fur hats worn by some Jewish sects.

Aalst Mayor Christoph D'Haese denied any racist element to the carnival, saying all he saw was "free speech."

"I did not see an antisemitic or racist parade. To the contrary, I saw a high mass of free speech and creativity," said D'Haese.

Chief Rabbi of Moscow Pinchas Goldschmidt, who is also president of the Conference of European Rabbis, said that "the satirical procession with antisemitic tropes in Aalst, Belgium, are extremely offensive and abuse the power of free speech which is such an essential ingredient in any liberal democracy," according to the report.

<https://www.algemeiner.com/2020/02/24/lapid-reprimands-belgian-ambassador-over-antisemitic-carnival/>

