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Europes treatment of Israel invokes Holocaust era Lieberman



Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman criticized Europe on Tuesday, saying its treatment of the Jewish state was comparable to policies during the Holocaust. Lieberman said Europe had turned a blind eye to a speech by Hamas chief Khaled Meshaal this week, in which he said the Palestinians would not "cede an inch" of historic Palestine, which includes much of modern Israel. "Once again, Europe has ignored calls for Israel's destruction," Lieberman told Israeli public radio. "We've already seen this at the end of the 1930s and at the beginning of the 1940s when Europe knew what was happening in the concentration camps and didn't act. "Europe has slapped itself in the face," he added. "When Jews are sacrificed, you have to ask yourself who will be next. In Toulouse, the terrorist who killed Jewish children also killed French soldiers," said Lieberman. He was referring to Mohamed Merah, who killed three Jewish schoolchildren and a teacher in the French city of Toulouse in March, days after killing three French troops. "Terrorism attacks Jews but it targets all countries and Western values. Israel is just an hors d'oeuvre," he added. Lieberman also criticized Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas for failing to publicly criticize Meshaal's speech and pursuing reconciliation with Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist movement that runs the Gaza Strip. "Hamas calls for Israel's destruction and refused to recognize Israel and Abu Mazen [Abbas] supports this position while Europe stays quiet," he said. Lieberman's comments come after Europe condemned Israel for reviving controversial settlement construction plans in the wake of the successful Palestinian bid for enhanced United Nations status. His comments provoked outrage from Yitzhak Herzog, number two in the opposition Labor party, who accused Lieberman of spreading "fear and anguish among Israelis by establishing a link between the current situation and the Holocaust". Herzog said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to revive the controversial E1 settlement plan "endangers Jerusalem, isolates Israel and weakens Abu Mazen while strengthening Hamas".