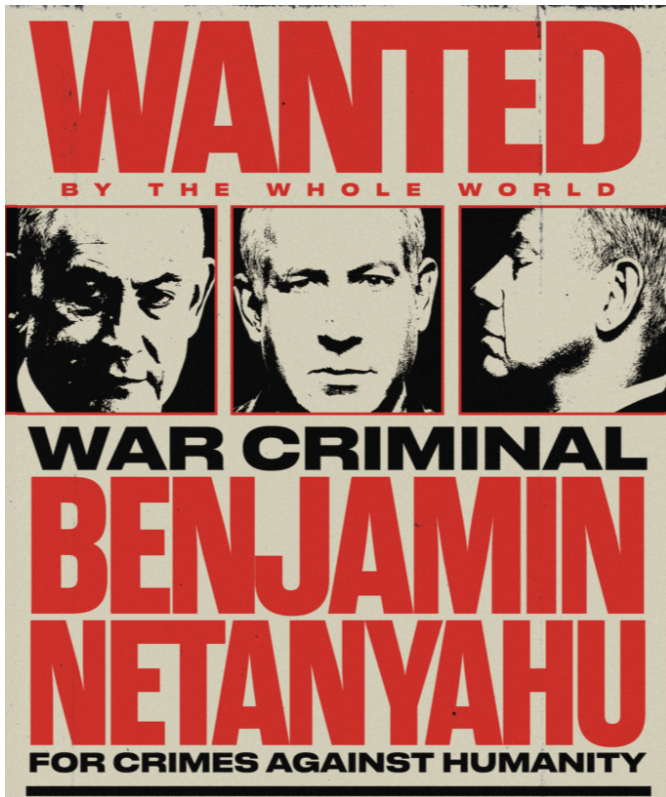


Poland says it will protect Benjamin Netanyahu from potential arrest



Warsaw, January 10 (RHC)-- The Polish government has adopted a resolution promising that senior Israeli officials – including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – can freely travel to Poland for the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp later this month.

Netanyahu faces an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged war crimes in Israel's war on Gaza.

“The Polish government treats the safe participation of the leaders of Israel in the commemorations on January 27, 2025, as part of paying tribute to the Jewish nation, millions of whose daughters and sons became victims of the Holocaust carried out by the Third Reich,” read the resolution, published by the office of Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk on Thursday.

Tusk told reporters that “whether it is the prime minister, the president or the minister – as it is currently declared – of education of Israel, whoever will come to Oswiecim for the celebrations in Auschwitz will be assured of safety and will not be detained.”

In November, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his ex-defence minister Yoav Gallant, as well as Hamas commander Ibrahim a-Masri, also known as Mohammed Deif, on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Israel has condemned the warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant, saying that it has acted in self-defence triggered by Hamas’s 7 October 2023 attack on Israel. As a member state of the ICC, Poland is required to detain suspects facing arrest warrants if they set foot on their soil, but the court has no way to enforce that. Israel is not a member of the ICC and disputes its jurisdiction.

On Wednesday, Bloomberg reported that Poland’s President Andrzej Duda wrote to Tusk asking that Netanyahu be allowed to attend the commemoration “unhindered”, given the event’s exceptional nature.

Malgorzata Paprocka, the head of Duda’s office, confirmed to state news agency PAP on Thursday that a letter had been sent. “In the opinion of the president, there is one issue – precisely because it is the Auschwitz camp, every person from Israel, every representative of the authorities of this country should have the opportunity to take part in this exceptional event,” she said.

Prime Minister Tusk, who signed the resolution, said he had received information from the Israeli embassy that the country would be represented by its education minister.

Netanyahu has not said whether he would attend the Auschwitz commemoration. He has attended previous anniversary events at Auschwitz.

Over 1.1 million people, mostly Jews, died in gas chambers or from starvation, cold and disease at Auschwitz, which Nazi Germany set up in occupied Poland during World War II.

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