

Netanyahu: Iran's Elections Won't Change Anything

Netanyahu said Wednesday that the coming "so-called" Iranian presidential election would not alter the Islamic republic's quest for nuclear weapons and that the regime would continue to pursue a bomb aimed at destroying Israel.

"I ask that nobody delude himself. The results of the elections in Iran won't change a thing," he said.

While Iran has not yet crossed the "red line"—a stockpile of enriched uranium sufficient to produce atomic bombs—the Islamic Republic is "methodically moving forward" with its program, Netanyahu said.

"This is a regime that is building nuclear weapons with the expressed purpose to annihilate Israel's 6 million Jews," Netanyahu said, alluding to the number of Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II. "We will not allow this to happen. We will never allow another Holocaust."

Netanyahu's comments in Warsaw carried added significance since they came a day before he traveled to Block 27, the Jewish section in the former Nazi death camp of Auschwitz in southern Poland, where he was to inaugurate a new pavilion meant to educate visitors about the Holocaust and Nazi Germany's quest to exterminate the Jewish people. The project to renovate and preserve the structure is a joint venture between Yad Vashem and the Israeli government, at a cost of 30 million shekels (\$8.3 million).

Netanyahu, whose father was born in Warsaw, has an emotional connection to the Holocaust, although he has faced criticism for citing it frequently in the context of current events, notably over the potential nuclear threat from Iran. For years, Netanyahu has used his annual address on Israel's

Holocaust Remembrance Day to caution about the danger of a nuclear Iran and vow that “never again” will the Jews be powerless to defend themselves.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday, Netanyahu remained undeterred by the critics, insisting that the intentions of the Iranians are just as murderous as those of the Germans in World War II.

“The comparison is intentional. Does Iran want to destroy the state of Israel, first and foremost its Jews? The answer is yes,” he said in response to a question from the Associated Press. “Here is where the comparison diverges, since there was no state of Israel back then that could defend itself. The difference is not in the hatred of Jews and the will to destroy them. This is something that is pretty consistent in history and even modern history. The Holocaust didn’t change this situation.”

Netanyahu and a team of five ministers met with their Polish counterparts and discussed security in Israel’s neighborhood, including the stalled peace talks with the Palestinians, the conflict in Syria and a series of bilateral issues, such as Poland’s possible purchase of Israeli armaments. Israel has been urging Poland, as a member of the European Union, to declare Hezbollah a terrorist organization.

Speaking alongside Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, Netanyahu contrasted the painful Jewish history in Poland with the current strong relations between Poland and Israel.

“The histories of our peoples are intertwined over thousands of years, in great achievement and also in great tragedy,” said Netanyahu. “We are both shaped by our past, and we are both focusing together on shaping our future.”

Tusk concurred, saying, “We speak a common language with Israel.”

The Germans carried out the Holocaust to a large extent in

occupied Poland, because it had Europe's largest Jewish population and it was at the heart of a railway network that allowed the Nazis to easily transport Jews there from elsewhere in Europe. Many Israeli leaders are children of Holocaust survivors, and Israel has the world's largest population of survivors.

In recent years, Poland has become one of the friendliest states to Israel.

Auschwitz remains the most vivid symbol of the cruelty of Nazi Germany's genocide of World War II. The world marks its International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Jan. 27, to coincide with the date of Auschwitz's liberation in 1945. The new exhibit Netanyahu was to inaugurate will, for the first time, present Auschwitz in the larger context of the Nazis' systematic attempt to exterminate Europe's Jews.

More than a million Jews died in Auschwitz and the adjacent Birkenau death camp in gas chambers or from starvation, disease and forced labor. Auschwitz-Birkenau was the most notorious of a system of death and labor camps that Nazi Germany built and operated in Poland.

"We will never forget the victims of the Holocaust. We will never forget the ultimate crime against humanity," Netanyahu said Wednesday. "And we will never forget our obligation to prevent this from ever happening again."

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