

Far-right Polish MP Just Took a Fire Extinguisher to a Menorah in Parliament

By Tim Hume
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“This is the biggest antisemitic scandal in the history of the Polish parliament,” the head of an anti-racism group told VICE News.

A far-right Polish MP used a fire extinguisher to put out Hanukkah candles in Poland’s parliament on Tuesday, in scenes described by incoming prime minister Donald Tusk as a “disgrace.”



Footage of the incident, during the Jewish holiday of Hanukah, showed Grzegorz Braun, a leader of the far-right Confederation party, extinguishing the candles on a lit menorah in the parliament building.

Amid the uproar someone can be heard saying: “You should be ashamed.”

Braun, who has been described by Polish anti-racism activists as “a particularly active preacher of hate,” responds: “Those who take part in acts of the satanic cult should be ashamed.”

Braun’s actions, which led to the suspension of parliamentary proceedings and filled the surrounding area with a hazy white mist due to the spray from the extinguisher, were roundly condemned by other politicians.

Tusk, the incoming centre-left prime minister, denounced Braun’s behaviour in the strongest terms.

“This is a disgrace. An unacceptable thing. This cannot happen again,” he said.

The speaker of parliament, Szymon Holownia, called the act “absolutely scandalous” and excluded Braun from the day’s parliamentary proceedings. He said he was reporting him to prosecutors, and that Braun would also face a financial penalty.

“There will be no tolerance for racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and any other deviations as long as I am the Speaker of the Sejm,” he said.

“Poland is home of all religions.”

Rafal Pankowski, head of Polish anti-racist group Never Again, told VICE News that Braun was a notorious hate preacher whom his organisation had repeatedly issued warnings about.

“This is the biggest antisemitic scandal in the history of the Polish Parliament,” he said.

“Braun is notorious for antisemitic, anti-LGBT and anti-Ukrainian rants.”

Braun has previously pushed the far-right conspiracy theory that there is a plot to turn Poland into a “Jewish state.”

Pankowski said that despite his group’s warnings about Braun’s extremist politics, the extremist was re-elected in October, while his party won 18 seats. Meanwhile, Pankowski said that “social media companies continue to amplify Braun's hateful messages on their platforms”.

Following the incident, Braun continued to post on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, retweeting posts commending his actions and expressing anti-Semitic sentiments about the presence of the menorah in the Polish parliament. One praised him for having “dared to raise his hand against a Talmudic and Satanic cult, extremely hostile to Christianity,” while another used the anti-Semitic trope that Poland is “ruled by servants” of other nations, rather than the Polish nation.

In the aftermath of the incident, the menorah was lit again.

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