

INTERNATIONAL
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Novel on anti-Semitic conspiracy theories taken off Belgian shelves after protests

The Associated Press

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BRUSSELS, Belgium: A novel about anti-Semitic conspiracy theories sold in book stores in Belgium was withdrawn by its owner after complaints were issued by Jewish groups, the Paris-based Simon Wiesenthal Center said Thursday.

The center said Alex Williams, executive director of Relay Belgium Press Shops SA, "responded within 24 hours to the Wiesenthal Center's protest against the distribution," of a novel written in French, titled "The Protocols of Zion."

The novel, which deals with the so-called Protocols of the Elders of Zion, is banned in most European Union nations because it promotes theories of Jewish attempts to rule the world, theories used by Nazis in Germany to launch hate and later genocide campaigns against Jews.

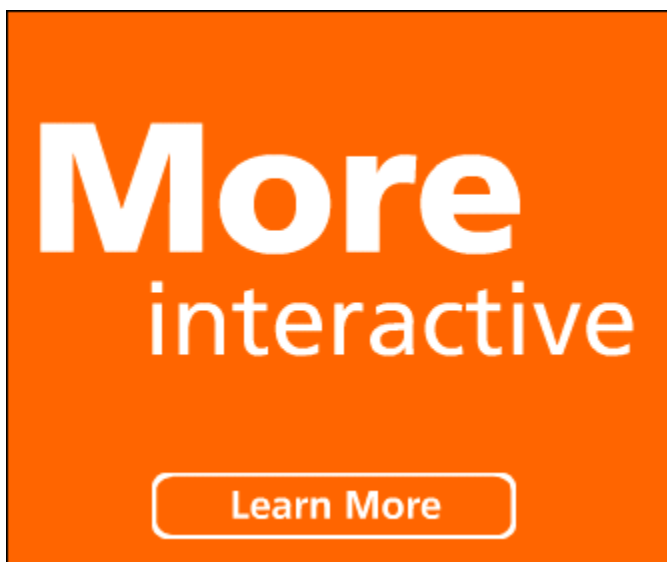
Newer versions allege Jewish responsibility for the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks and the London and Madrid terrorist bombings. In Belgium, hate literature is not prohibited, but authors can be prosecuted.

A Brussels-based group, CEJI, A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe, said Thursday it had complained to Belgium's anti-racism office about the book.

The CEJI said the book was written by two Belgians, but published on Jersey, one of the Channel Islands which are British dependencies.

A call made to Williams' office in Brussels was not immediately answered.

The Wiesenthal Center said in a statement it had received an e-mail from Williams that "instructions have been given to remove this book from the shelves," and that Williams asked the distributor to recall the title.



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