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Anti-Semitism at Historic Lows in Russia, Jewish Congress Leader Says

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Mikhail Tereschenko / TASS

Russia is currently experiencing its lowest level of anti-Semitism in history and has the lowest level of anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, according to Yuri Kanner, the president of the Russian Jewish Congress.

In the Soviet period, Jews in Russia were targeted by the government with anti-Semitic imagery, slogans and even arrests during times of high political tension. According to a recent survey conducted by the independent Levada Center — based on interviews with Russian Jews and the general population — 80 percent of respondents said anti-Semitism levels had receded since the Soviet period.

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"It's not possible to say that there are no anti-Semites in Russia, but there are efforts being

taken in our country to pre-empt their possible actions," Kanner was cited as saying by the Parlamentskaya Gazeta newspaper of record at the opening of the second International Conference on Countering Xenophobia and Anti-Semitism in Moscow on Monday.

"This is especially clear against the backdrop of the tragic events that took place on Saturday in the synagogue of Pittsburgh in the United States," he added.

Meanwhile, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov issued a statement at the conference warning about "the spread of anti-semitisim and neo-Nazim in European countries," the state-run TASS news agency reported.

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