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Israel's Holocaust Memorial Apologizes for 'Pro-Russian' Commemoration

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The World Holocaust Forum took place amid a clash of narratives between Russia and Poland over the causes of World War II and their respective roles in the conflict. **Abir Sultan / POOL / EPA / TASS**

Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial museum has apologized for hosting an "unbalanced" forum after the event drew criticism for showing what observers said were pro-Russian videos, Israeli media reported Monday.

The clips shown at the Jan. 23 event in Jerusalem portrayed the Soviet Union as nearly the only victor over Nazi Germany, the Haaretz daily reported Monday, sparking backlash from historians, politicians and other public figures. It added that the videos showed incorrect depictions of Poland's and its neighbors' borders, confused concentration camps with death camps and made no reference to Ukraine.

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Yad Vashem said that the "inaccuracies" at the event marking the 75th anniversary of the

liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp "created an unbalanced impression."

Among the inaccuracies, the memorial said, was a lack of any reference to the partition of Poland as a result of the 1939 Soviet-Nazi non-aggression pact. The videos also failed to acknowledge Nazi Germany's invasion of Western Europe in 1940.

"We apologize for the very regrettable mishap that occurred," Yad Vashem's head of Holocaust research, Dan Michman, said in a letter cited by Haaretz.

"These videos do not represent the perspective of Yad Vashem's research on these issues," Michman was cited as saying.

The letter cited by Haaretz doesn't specify to what degree Yad Vashem was responsible for the content of the ceremony it hosted.

The World Holocaust Forum took place amid a clash of narratives between Russia and Poland over the causes of World War II and their respective roles in the conflict.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who was among the world leaders to speak at the event, had suggested that Poland's actions had led to the war. Warsaw has accused Putin of "renewing Stalinist propaganda" for claiming that the Soviet occupation of Poland "saved lives."

Polish President Andrzej Duda boycotted the Israeli ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz because of Putin's attendance and his exclusion from the podium. Putin did not attend the commemorative events held that week in Poland.

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