

Israel recalls ambassador to Switzerland

by UPI

JERUSALEM -- Israel recalled its ambassador to Switzerland to protest the Swiss president's meeting with the Iranian leader the day before Holocaust Remembrance Day.

In a statement issued Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said ambassador Ilan Elgar would be recalled to Jerusalem as soon as possible for consultation, The Jerusalem Post reported.

Among other things, the statement cited Switzerland's hosting of a "racist and Holocaust denier who openly declares his intentions to wipe Israel off the map."

Swiss President Hans-Rudolf Merz's met Sunday with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Geneva; Jews worldwide Monday commemorated Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Switzerland's deputy ambassador to Israel, Monika Schmutz-Kirgoz, was called for a meeting in Jerusalem to relay Israel's displeasure with the Merz-Ahmadinejad meeting.

The recall came hours before Ahmadinejad was to deliver remarks at the U.N. Global Conference on Racism in Geneva. Several countries, including the United States and Israel, are protesting the summit, saying they fear it could turn into a forum for anti-Semitism.

"Israel cannot ignore the fact that the conference ... being attended by the known Holocaust denier is taking place on the very same day that the Jewish people commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day," the joint statement said.

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