

Jewish groups say Iran deserves sanctions for Holocaust remarks: Ahmadinejad calls Holocaust a myth

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American Jewish groups, irate over comments by Iran's president that the Nazi Holocaust was a myth, are stepping up pressure on the international community to punish Iran for the remarks.

Several Jewish groups have launched a public relations campaign to censure Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who in mid-December called the Holocaust a myth and said Palestinians are suffering because of European guilt over the Holocaust.

"If you committed the crime, then give a part of your own land in Europe, the United States, Canada or Alaska to them so that the Jews can establish their country," Ahmadinejad said, according to the *New York Times*.

Ahmadinejad was echoing comments he made at an Islamic summit in Mecca weeks earlier. In October, at an Iranian conference titled "The World Without Zionism," he called for Israel to be "wiped off the map."

In response, Jewish groups are mounting public pressure, including a rare move by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which criticized the Bush administration for not referring Iran's noncompliance on nuclear activities to the UN Security Council.

"As the United States and its allies ponder their next move, a radical Iranian regime is steadily marching toward an atomic bomb," wrote AIPAC president Howard Kohr in the group's newsletter. AIPAC is also supporting a bill in Congress that condemns Ahmadinejad's rhetoric.

Both the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee are calling for sanctions against Iran. In addition, world government officials, the Vatican and

leaders of the National Council of Churches and Episcopal Church sharply criticized the Iranian leader's words.

"Anti-Semitism's most vociferous manifestation is the 'Big Lie' now coming from Tehran," said Bob Edgar, NCC general secretary, in a statement that also reaffirmed the NCC's support for the security of the state of Israel, alongside a viable Palestinian state.

Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold of the Episcopal Church said December 14 that it was "with particular pain" that he read of the Iranian president's claim that the Holocaust is a myth. "His words remind us anew of the evil of bigotry and the suffering of our Jewish sisters and brothers," Griswold said. "The Holocaust was no myth but an event of unconscionable inhumanity."