

Sweden hikes security for Jewish community

Written by AFP / The Swedish Wire

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- [US Jewish group blasts Sweden for anti-Semitism](#)

Sweden's government said Monday it would give the country's Jewish community funds to increase security, in response to criticism from a Jewish lobby group following a string of crimes against Jews.

"The government is earmarking four million kronor (\$621,000, 440,000 euros) in the 2012 budget to increase security and diminish the vulnerability of the Jewish community," the government said in a statement.

US-based Jewish rights group the Simon Wiesenthal Center criticised Sweden earlier this year for not doing enough to protect the minority.

The group among other things blasted authorities for making the community pay the equivalent of a "Jewish tax," since they themselves had to foot the bill for most security measures, including setting up anti-attack barriers in front of the synagogue during religious celebrations.

"If the Jewish congregations don't take extra security measures there will be people who don't dare visit the synagogues in Sweden. Therefore public funds are needed in the form of a one-off sum to increase security and reduce the vulnerability of the Jewish minority in society," Integration Minister Erik Ullenhag said in the statement

A slew of slurs and other forms of harassment of Sweden's Jews have been registered in recent years, primarily in Malmö, the third-biggest Swedish city in the south of the country.

Some 400 anti-Semitic acts were registered in Malmö in 2009 alone, accounting for more than half of the total number of hate crimes in that city, and several Jewish families have left in recent years due to the threatening atmosphere, according to local Jewish representatives.

"Studies have shown that while tolerance is increasing in society, anti-Semitic views have not decreased at the same rate. The Jewish minority is subjected to anti-Semitic hate crimes and harassment. Even children are subjected to harassment in their everyday life," the government

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said.

"Some Jews in Sweden choose not to reveal that they belong to the Jewish minority out of fear," it added.