



ISRAEL



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Protest against Jehovah's Witnesses event in central Israel turns violent

Event was originally cancelled due to opposition from anti-assimilation group

Hundreds of protesters turned up to demonstrate outside a Jehovah's Witnesses seminar being held in a municipal building in a city in the center of Israel Saturday.

Despite police presence, the demonstration against the event became violent, Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* reported.

The protesters were angry that after a series of protests and petitions, a court ruled that the Jehovah's Witnesses event could finally take place in the city of Ra'anana, north of Tel Aviv.

The event was originally scheduled for a couple of weeks ago but after the anti-assimilation organization Yad L'Achim group found out that the seminar was set to take place in a municipality building, representatives contacted city officials who called off the event.

However, the Lod District court ruled that the municipality's objection infringed on the right to freedom of religion and ritual.

According to the Jehovah's Witnesses, the municipality broke an agreement on the use of the sports center due to discrimination.

On the other side, the municipality said that there was "real fear" the Jehovah's Witnesses sought to convince children and teenagers to convert from Judaism.

According to *Ha'aretz*, demonstrators prayed and sang loudly in groups, as the Jehovah's Witnesses participants entered the building.

Some of the protesters jeered at the event-goers and tried to convince them not to go in while others simply quietly, according to the report.

"Any Jew who leaves Judaism becomes a Jew-killer!" one man shouted, according to *Ha'aretz*.

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