

GLOBAL

Elon Musk lays wreath at Auschwitz after private tour with Ben Shapiro and European rabbi

Musk had originally batted down the invitation from European Jewish Association chair Rabbi Menachem Margolin before tentatively accepting.



Holocaust survivor Gidon Lev, European Jewish Association Chairman Rabbi Menachem Margolin, Elon Musk with son, and Ben Shapiro stand together at the entrance of Auschwitz, Jan. 22, 2024. (Courtesy EJA)

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BY SHIRA LI BARTOV

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KRAKOW ([JTA](#)) — Elon Musk went on a private tour of Auschwitz ahead of a day of engagement with European Jewish leaders.

A delegation from the European Jewish Association conference in Krakow, where Musk is a featured speaker, is scheduled to visit the Nazi concentration camp on Tuesday. But the tech magnate — who has received criticism for allowing and abetting antisemitism on X, formerly Twitter, the social media platform he owns — instead visited on Monday “due to schedule concerns,” conference participants were told.

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Musk traveled with Ben Shapiro, the Jewish right-wing pundit; EJA Chairman Rabbi Menachem Margolin, who is affiliated with the Chabad Hasidic movement; and Gidon Lev, an 88-year-old Holocaust survivor who was imprisoned at a different concentration camp as a child. Musk also brought along one of his young sons and carried him on his shoulders through the camp, including under the infamous “Arbeit Macht Frei” (“Work Makes One Free”) sign at the camp’s entrance, according to pictures distributed by EJA.

Musk laid a wreath and took part in a memorial ceremony, according to the Jewish group. A video shows him getting a tour from an Auschwitz guide and standing during a memorial prayer. Musk did not immediately elaborate on the visit on X, though he did share a picture of himself and Shapiro there.



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The visit comes four months after Musk tentatively agreed to visit Auschwitz during a live chat on X with Margolin, who exhorted him “to walk there, to feel it, to understand it,” and other right-leaning Jewish leaders that was hosted by Shapiro, who has a large following on X.

At first Musk rejected the invitation, saying, “I’m very well aware of the Holocaust and Auschwitz and Dachau and whatnot, and all the things that happened that were terrible. So this is not certainly new information for me. So I don’t need to visit Auschwitz to understand. I get it.”

But after Margolin pressed the issue, Musk responded, “I will seriously consider it,” before later adding that he could swing by after a visit to a factory he owns in Berlin. “Consider it a tentative yes,” he subsequently said.

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That was before Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel and Israel's resulting war in Gaza, which has triggered a new wave of anti-Israel and antisemitic sentiment on social media, including X. Musk visited a ravaged kibbutz in southern Israel with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in late November, saying that he found the experience "jarring" and left convinced that Israel should continue its war in Gaza. But he also drew fire — and the ire of more advertisers — for calling an antisemitic post "the actual truth."

Musk is scheduled to take part in a live conversation about online antisemitism with Shapiro on Monday night at the conference, titled "NEVER AGAIN: Lip Service or Deep Commitment?"

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