

Contested Memory: Holocaust commemoration events in Morocco

Presenter: Kim Robin Stoller

After the Second World War, around 280,000 Jews lived in Morocco. King Mohammed V is said to have protected Moroccan Jews during the Holocaust against Vichy France. After the Holocaust, most Jews left Morocco between 1948 and 1967 for Israel, France, Canada, the United States, and South America. This happened against the background of a growing feeling of insecurity and antisemitism in the context of the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948 and Morocco's independence in 1956. People of Moroccan descent are now the second largest group in Israel after immigrants from the former Soviet Union, but there are no official diplomatic relations between Morocco and Israel. In Morocco itself, there are only a few thousand Jews left. Confronted with hate, civil society organizations started to organize Holocaust commemoration events a decade ago, echoing the initiatives of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Furthermore, some state officials endorsed the inclusion of the Holocaust in education curricula. Already a few years before, King Mohamed VI pointed at an international forum the need for Holocaust education. This paper discusses the specific Moroccan context, the activities related to the Holocaust, as well as the campaigns launched against those events.