

# UNESCO drops anti-Semitic Belgian carnival event from cultural list

By  
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Participants dressed in SS-style uniforms take part in the carnival parade in Aalst, Belgium, on February 10, 2013. File Photo by Thierry Roge/EPA

Dec. 14 (UPI) -- The United Nations cultural heritage organization removed Belgium's carnival celebration from its cultural heritage list over anti-Semitic representations in the event.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization removed the event in Aalst from the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during a meeting in Bogota, Colombia, on Friday.

"The committee based its decision on the fact that the recurrence of racist and anti-Semitic representations is incompatible with the fundamental principals of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage," UNESCO said in [a statement](#).

The Aalst's carnival celebration has come under fire for its stereotypical characterizations of Jewish people, with one float this year showing people with side curls and exaggerated noses sitting atop piles of money. The Anti-Defamation League [in 2013](#) said it was "outraged and appalled" when participants in the event dressed as Nazi SS officers and mocked the Holocaust, which killed millions of Jewish people.

UNESCO's assistant director general for culture, Ernesto Ottone, said the organization had warned Aalst officials numerous times to halt the anti-Semitic imagery.

"They can continue to do the festival. We are not opposing that," [Ottone said](#). "What we don't want is the brand of

UNESCO on a festival that for [some] may be humor, but for us is mockery of some communities."