

AJC CE, “Never Again” Association Write Letter to FIFA about Polish Referee’s Antisemitic Rant

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On 4 October, AJC Central Europe and the “Never Again” Association co-organized an event titled “Let’s Kick Racism out of Stadiums”, a discussion on tackling antisemitism and intolerance in soccer stadiums around Europe. Following the event, Łukasz Araszkiwicz, a FIFA-trained referee and member of the Polish Football Association went on a rant against Jews in a letter to organizers. Araszkiwicz said he had never witnessed antisemitism (but racism – yes) during his 17-year career as a referee and claimed that “this is just another utter balderdash spun by Jewish centers and milieus—one knows very well for what purpose.”

*"Please do not send me such invitations anymore because I do not agree with it at all. Jews are not a chosen people despite that eternal hubris of theirs ... and portraying Poles as antisemites and talking about Polish concentration camps is the biggest Jewish f*****g despicable thing since World War 2.", he added.*

Dr. Sebastian Rejak, Acting Director of the American Jewish Committee Central Europe and Prof. Rafał Pankowski, head of the "Never Again" Association, sent a letter to FIFA president Gianni Infantino, along with a copy of Araszkiwicz's email, and urged him to take a "principled position on this matter." They also pushed for Infantino to uphold FIFA's code of conduct related to issues of racism and discrimination.

"Mr. Lukasz Araszkiwicz's statement repeats the most widespread antisemitic myths about the Jewish community as a homogeneous group that aims to slander countries and ethnic groups—with reactions to antisemitism allegedly being an example of just that," the letter stated. "Unfortunately, the words of Mr. Araszkiwicz show that the use of negative stereotypes about Jews is a phenomenon that is still present also in the world of football."

Pankowski and Rejak received no response from the Polish Football Association, but the provincial Wielkopolska Football Association condemned the referees' antisemitic words and explained he was no longer its member.

This was covered by the Jewish News Syndicate.

Cover image by Arne Müsseler

<https://ajccentraleurope.org/2021/11/12/ajc-ce-and-polish-ngo-write-letter-to-fifa-about-polish-referees-antisemitic-rant>