

# Why does Germany fund demonization of Israel?

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German Chancellor Angela Merkel meets with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu Photo: GPO

In speech after speech, German leaders restate their country's "moral and historic responsibility" toward Israel and the Jewish people after the Holocaust. This is as it should be – the heirs to the Nazi regime cannot bring the Six Million back to life, but they can help to protect Israel, the nation state of the Jewish people, from attack. On this basis, the German government has provided important defense technology, such as submarines, to strengthen Israeli deterrence against Iran, and top officials, including Chancellor Angela Merkel, have stated their opposition to the anti-Israel demonization, in the form of unprincipled boycotts, lawfare (exploiting legal processes and institutions), and waves of false "war crimes" allegations.

However, there is a vast gap between the words of the leaders and the actions of their government – specifically in the form of taxpayer money provided to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), political foundations and church groups that are central to delegitimization. European money, in general, and German funds in particular, pay for the fuel and ammunition for the political warfare strategy adopted at the infamous NGO Forum of the 2001 Durban Conference, whose participants declared their objective of "the complete international isolation of Israel as an apartheid state." In many parts of Europe, including Germany, particularly on university campuses, churches and trade unions, this insidious form of warfare has been successful in demonizing Israel.

One of the most egregious examples is the German support for and cooperation with a notorious "one-state" (meaning no Israel) NGO known as Zochrot, whose mission is to "raise public awareness of the Palestinian Nakba" and to support the so-called Palestinian "right of return." Zochrot repeats modern blood libels, in the form of accusations of "ethnic cleansing" and "forcible displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian people."

The money, and therefore shared responsibility, is provided from two official German sources: the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS – named after the Jewish radical of the early 1900s, and affiliated with the political party Die Linke) and Misereor (the German Catholic Church's "humanitarian aid" framework).

Zochrot is not an unfortunate exception – there are numerous examples of German money used in support of anti-Israel NGO campaigns. RSL lists over 20 "projects" with various political advocacy NGOs active in the conflict, and many are involved in the Durban agenda of political warfare against the nation-state of the Jewish people. The Heinrich Boll Stiftung, another "political foundation" (associated with the Green Party), supports a number of fringe Israeli groups that are used to justify demonization and the false allegations of "war crimes" throughout Europe, including in Germany, the United Nations Human Rights Council, and in the framework of the International Criminal Court.

Brotdür die Welt–EED (the Protestant Church's aid framework), which gets the majority of its budget from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, has funded the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), which blames Israel for the oppression of Christians, and promotes the Kairos Palestine BDS document, and Coalition of Women for Peace, whose "Who Profits?" project initiated numerous BDS campaigns in Europe.

CWP is also supported by Medico International (funded by the Foreign Office and other ministries, if aZivik – Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, and EU frameworks) and which pushes a strong anti-Israel agenda. In addition, EED joined MISEREOR in endorsing the policy of labeling goods produced over the 1949 Armistice line, as part of the wider BDS campaign.

Since most of the details are secret, it is hard to distinguish between a lack of due diligence on the part of the officials responsible for humanitarian aid and NGOs, or deliberate support for the demonization of Israel. In some cases, efforts are made to explain German support for these campaigns in terms of opposition to the post-1967 “occupation” or Israeli settlement policies – but Zochrot, the BDS groups and the wide NGO network promoting Durban have a 1948 agenda, supporting the 66-year campaign to roll back any form of Jewish national self-determination and sovereign equality.

When presented with detailed documentation, officials have attacked the messengers, and responded with the absurd claim of “balance”, that many of the German frameworks also support “pro-Israel” and “propeace” activities, as if moral behavior in one sphere justifies immorality in another.

Instead of feeble and insensitive excuses, Germany has a fundamental and immediate responsibility to stop all support for the political war demonizing Israel. German and Israeli officials should cooperate in writing a binding code of conduct to govern the activities facilitated by any funds that originate with German taxpayers, including political foundations and church aid frameworks. Words of support for Israel and the Jewish people must be matched by deeds, including in the realm of “soft power” and political warfare.

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