

Anti-Palestinianism and fanatic support for Israeli apartheid in Germany



Berlin, June 17 (RHC)-- While the Israeli regime carried out routine bombardments of Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip last month, German government authorities in Berlin were busy repressing public gatherings that aimed to commemorate the Palestinian Nakba.

Peaceful protesters were beaten and arrested, speeches were banned, and signs were removed. Violence was also exerted against Jewish activists campaigning in support of Palestine, whose Nakba commemoration was the only one that had not been banned in advance.

Authorities in the German capital and the country's largest city had previously prohibited commemorations of the Nakba, claiming there was a danger of antisemitic incitement as well as acts of violence and glorification of violence. This ban was backed and upheld by local courts.

The Nakba refers to the genocidal formation of the illegitimate entity of Israel in 1948 which entailed the forced expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland. More than that, the Nakba represents an ongoing epoch of settler-colonial violence and enduring injustices against the indigenous people of Palestine.

The legal bans and attacks on pro-Palestine events in Germany are not isolated incidents but follow a well-established tradition of German state violence against critics of German-backed Israeli policies.

In fact, Germany has a violent history of oppressing Palestinians in both Palestine and Germany. In addition to its dedicated support for the Israeli apartheid regime, in recent years Germany has facilitated the use of bureaucratic and legal measures to suppress dissent.

The German federal parliament adopted an anti-BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) resolution in 2019 which smears the boycott movement as antisemitic. Public events and protests associated with BDS have often been canceled in reference to the resolution, while individuals supporting Palestine have been ostracized.

People have been targeted for speaking about Palestine, while Palestinians have oftentimes been profiled and attacked for their mere identity. German state media Deutsche Welle (DW), for example, fired several employees of Palestinian and Arab origin. A culture of fear has been perpetuated.

The ban on the boycott of Israel represents a restriction on freedom of speech and assembly in the country. At the same time, the German state continues to boycott Palestinian human rights. Allegations of antisemitic danger are regularly quoted as justifications for silencing free speech on Palestine. In particular, "hostility toward Israel" is often cited as an argument.

Based on the wrong equation of the colonial movement of Zionism with Judaism, resistance against the violent, German-backed settler-colonial conquest is thus presented as anti-Jewish hatred.

Although anti-Jewish sentiment has a long and violent tradition in German culture and history, today the descendants of the perpetrators of the Holocaust are blaming Palestinians, and sometimes more broadly Muslims and Arabs, for antisemitism.

Accusations of antisemitism have been used as a weapon to police, silence, and intimidate Palestinians. In this stubborn dominant narrative, the Palestinian liberation struggle, and oftentimes the mere survival and existence of Palestinians, is projected as a genocidal danger for Jews and an eminent threat to so-called Western values.

Given the extent to which Palestinians have been dehumanized and vilified in German media and political discourse, it is apparent that anti-Palestinianism has become engraved in the structures of the contemporary German state.

Elected officials across the political spectrum have obsessively insisted that the Israeli regime's so-called "security" is Germany's "raison d'état." These dynamics are part and parcel of state violence directed against Palestinians, who are not only victims of a brutal Israeli apartheid settler-colonial regime but also of German policies.

While Germany is aggressively supporting the Israeli apartheid regime's brutal and racist policies in Palestine, it is anxiously policing the discourse on Palestine in Germany and preventing Palestinians from commemorating the Nakba and continuous genocidal atrocities committed by the German-backed Israeli regime.

The policing of even mild criticism of the Israeli apartheid regime and the criminalization of Palestinian resistance are also expressions of Germany's own colonial character and, in fact, in line with its colonial genocides in Africa in the twentieth century and its staunch support for the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Today, Germany is policing the behavior and existence of indigenous people at home and abroad, depicting Palestinians as irrational, violent, and racist and smearing and silencing critics of German-Israeli policies.

As part of their support for the Israeli project, the European Union, and Germany in particular, have been disseminating exhaustive propaganda on behalf of the Israeli apartheid regime. The Israeli project represents a European settler-colonial outpost in Western Asia, whose contested existence in its current form can only be secured through perpetual violence against indigenous people which manifests itself in ethnic cleansing and apartheid, among other racist policies.

It is thus unsurprising that "Israel" represents a confluence of various German and European fantasies of superiority. The centrality of Zionism in European identity is ad nauseam constructed in daily political communication. It was, for example, once again reaffirmed in Ursula von der Leyen's recent speech in praise of Israel's so-called "Independence Day," the term used by Israel and its supporters to refer to the Nakba of 1948.

The German politician and president of the EU Commission recycled an abundance of Zionist myths, reiterating the colonial rhetoric that has been used to justify the genocidal erasure of the indigenous people and the continuous violent imposition of the apartheid regime. "A dream was realized with Israel's Independence Day," von der Leyen claimed, referring to the colony as a Jewish home "in the promised land" and "vibrant democracy in the heart of the Middle East."

This romanticization of settler-colonial conquest was further evident when she commended the illegal settlers: "You have literally made the desert bloom." This phrase, in particular, subsumes fantasies of the racist superiority of settlers and erases the existence of the indigenous people, depicting Palestine as a land without people - the essence of Zionist colonialism.

Von der Leyen's discourse about shared culture, values, and connections culminates in her exclamation toward settlers that "Your freedom is our freedom." Given that so-called "freedom" for Israelis in the current context requires the perpetual dehumanization and subjugation of the indigenous people, European freedom is inherently constructed on anti-Palestinianism.

Palestinian resistance and existence thus remain an imminent danger to so-called European values and civilization.

Germany's restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly are not about alleged antisemitic dangers but rather represent its anti-indigenous policy and fanatic support for apartheid and settler-colonialism in Germany, Palestine, and beyond. While protests in support of Palestine have been stifled, the German state has actively been boycotting Palestinian human rights for decades.

Effectively, Germany is simultaneously supporting the continuation of the Nakba, while restricting freedom of speech and assembly for critics of its colonial policies.

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