



German Police Shut Down Palestine Conference

Description

WORLD : In perhaps the most serious round of repression against Palestine solidarity organizers, German police on Friday shut down the Palestine Congress in Berlin, arresting several attendees and ordering delegates to leave immediately.

German officials also prohibited scheduled speaker Ghassan Abu Sitta, Palestinian-British surgeon and the rector of Glasgow University from even entering the country. He was to speak about his experiences with Palestinian victims of Israel in Gaza hospitals where he has worked.

He says in this interview with Middle East Eye that his testimony could be seen as evidence against Germany in the case Nicaragua has brought against Berlin at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Nicaragua has charged Germany with complicity with Israel's genocide because of its arms shipments to Tel Aviv.

The doctor says his treatment by the German authorities amounted to witness intimidation:

The Congress aimed to raise awareness about Nicaragua's charges against Germany at the ICJ. German police dramatically stormed the stage of the conference and proceeded to shut down speakers after the Congress had already begun.

The police stopped the conference livestream, and broke into the control room to shut off the power. Police prevented remote speakers to address the Congress.

Andrew Feinstein, son of a Holocaust survivor who worked with Nelson Mandela in South Africa and who is challenging Labour leader Keir Starmer for his Parliamentary seat in London, told a conference on Gaza in Blackburn, England on Saturday, that he was supposed to be speaking on a panel with Dr. Ghassan. "Germany is the last country on the planet that should be displaying such fascist behavior," Feinstein said.

Feinstein speaking about what happened at the Berlin conference:

Red Media provided live updates to the police repression, reporting that, “900 police are deployed to the congress, whose start they held up for hours.

They demanded that organizers allow all German media into the congress, ironically to ‘safeguard free speech’ and then denied entry to most of the registered delegates.”

Among those arrested by police at the Congress were Jewish activists.

Anti-Zionist Jewish activists are heavily targeted in Germany, despite Germany’s attempt to justify its support to Israel as “collective guilt” over the holocaust and repenting for its infamous antisemitism.

Yet, according to researcher Emily Dische-Becker, almost a third of those deplatformed, arrested, or otherwise sanctioned for alleged antisemitism are themselves Jewish.

Videos from the repression show a Jewish activist being arrested outside of the conference, with police seizing a banner that read “Jew Against Genocide.”

German authorities have staged several crackdowns on the Palestine solidarity movement since Oct. 7. Activists claim that while German Jews are indeed arrested for showing solidarity with Palestine, it is the Palestinians that bear the brunt of repression.

“We Jews are just getting arrested, the Palestinians are being beaten,” German-Israeli activist Iris Hefets told Al Jazeera. On March 22, the homes of Palestinian activists Said and Yasemin were raided by German police in the middle of the night from their homes in Berlin, with both alleging targeted persecution from German authorities.

Former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis, who was inside the venue, was prevented from speaking “because German police burst into our Berlin venue to disband our Palestine Congress (1930s style),” he wrote on X.

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