

Musicians, actors, artists sign petition demanding Roger Waters be allowed to perform in Frankfurt

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Many artists, musicians, writers and others have signed an online petition demanding that the cancellation of Roger Waters' upcoming concert in Frankfurt, Germany be rescinded and the performance held as originally scheduled.

The petition argues that the February 24 decision by the Frankfurt City Council and the Hessian State government to cancel Waters' scheduled May 28 performance is based on thoroughly false and slanderous charges. The German government officials allege that the internationally acclaimed artist and co-founder of the British rock band Pink Floyd is an anti-Semite.

The petition explains that the Frankfurt authorities based their accusation against Waters on his call for "a cultural boycott of Israel," his comparison of the Israeli government to the South African apartheid regime and his efforts to "put pressure on artists to cancel events in Israel."

The statement points out that these positions are not unique to Waters, nor are they "outside the boundaries of mainstream public opinion," and that many human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Israel's B'Tselem, various United Nations agencies and South African officials have also defined Israel as an apartheid state. Meanwhile, innumerable organizations and individuals have made the comparison between Israel and apartheid-era South Africa.

Among the prominent signatories to the petition so far are musicians Brian Eno, Peter Gabriel and Eric Clapton, actresses Susan Sarandon, Julie Christie and Alia Shawkat, film directors Ken Loach, Terry Gilliam and Ramin Bahrani, playwright Caryl Churchill, artists Julian Schnabel and Dread Scott, comedians Alexei Sayle and David Cross, journalist John Pilger, professors Noam Chomsky and Cornel West, historian Ilan Pappé and

political activist Daniel Ellsberg.

The petition was initiated by American comedian, writer and political commentator Katie Halper on March 12 on Change.org under the headline "Let Pink Floyd's Roger Waters Perform In Frankfurt, Germany." As of this writing, the petition has received 9,642 signatures.

The campaign defends Waters' criticism of Israel's treatment of Palestinians as "part of his long-term advocacy on behalf of human rights across the globe." The petition introduction also asserts that the effort to vilify Waters is a "dangerous campaign that purposely conflates criticism of Israel's illegal and unjust policies with antisemitism. This conflation perpetuates the antisemitic trope which presents Jews as a monolith who blindly support Israel. Some of Israel's loudest critics are Jews. But those who weaponize antisemitism are fine contributing to it."

Finally, the petition calls on those who canceled the concert to reverse their decision and points a finger at them, stating that they "would rather see Waters' music removed than engage with the issues his music highlights," and that they should "consider their own history of antisemitism, racism and genocide and how instances of these can be stopped today in other parts of the world, including in Occupied Palestine."

As reported here by the *World Socialist Web Site* at the time the concert was canceled, the disgraceful act of censorship is being carried out by a political coalition in Frankfurt led by the Social Democrats, Greens and Free Democrats. The venue where the concert was to be held is jointly owned in a 60-40 split between the city and the state of Hesse, which is run by a Christian Democrat/Green government that also approved the decision.

The WSWS went on to explain that the false

accusations of anti-Semitism directed against those who oppose the policies of the Israeli government are being used in Germany by far-right and militarist forces, the real source of fascism and anti-Semitism.

In September, Waters' show in Krakow, Poland, was canceled by the venue at the instigation of local far-right politicians, and, in October, the concert scheduled for May 21 in Munich was also canceled. In these cases, government officials used the false claims of the artist being both anti-Semitic and "pro-Putin," because of his principled denunciations of the US-NATO war in Ukraine.

In a March 16 post on his social media accounts, Roger Waters wrote that his lawyers were taking steps to make sure that his shows in Munich and Frankfurt took place as contracted. He wrote, "I am taking the unprecedented step of appealing to the law to protect me from the unconstitutional actions of two authorities which seem to rely upon the fundamentally false accusation that has been made against me; namely that I am antisemitic."

Waters added: "I want to state for the record and once and for all that I am not and never have been antisemitic and nothing that anyone can say or publish will alter that." He concluded by insisting that he did not need to "keep making my position clear on this issue," and he was confident that "truth and the law will prevail and that these authorities will not succeed in denying any of my basic human rights."

The growing support for Roger Waters among artists, musicians, writers, actors, film directors and others reveals that the campaign to silence him rests on a very thin pro-Zionist and pro-imperialist foundation. Meanwhile, the brazen lies being spread about Waters are themselves evidence of the desperate effort by the ruling powers to keep the broad public from being exposed to political positions and ideas with which many would no doubt agree.



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