

Roger Waters wins legal case against Frankfurt concert cancellation

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2 May 2023

On April 24, an administrative court in Frankfurt ruled in favor of Roger Waters' legal request that the decision of the city government and the state of Hesse to cancel his concert at Festhalle Frankfurt on May 28 be overturned.

In social media posts on Thursday, Waters wrote "the concert in Frankfurt on the 28th will go ahead."

The internationally acclaimed musician and co-founder of the English rock band Pink Floyd also wrote: "I can't wait to bring my message of love and peace to Germany in May, there to stand shoulder-to-shoulder, not only with all my brothers and sisters in the BDS [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions] movement, but also with the rest of the burgeoning anti-war, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian, anti-establishment movement that warms this bleeding heart."

Waters' performance of his "This Is Not a Drill" tour concert in Frankfurt was canceled on February 24 by the city administration, known as the Magistrat, in league with the state government of Hesse on the basis of the thoroughly false and baseless accusation that the musician is an antisemite.

In attempting to carry out their act of disgraceful political and artistic censorship, a coalition of Social Democrats, Greens, Free Democrats, Christian Democrats and Volt party representatives came together to terminate Waters' concert "immediately and for good cause."

According to a report in *Deutsche Welle*, the Frankfurt court ruled that, as the owners of concert organizer Messe Frankfurt, the state and city were obliged "to make it possible for Waters to stage the concert" as contractually agreed.

Part of the accusations against Waters by the censors has been the attempt to conflate his persistent

opposition to the Israel government with antisemitism. In their statement, the Frankfurt officials called Waters "one of the most widely spread antisemites in the world."

The Frankfurt censors sought to present, as "proof" of his antisemitism, the use by Waters, in the past, of the Star of David on a giant inflatable pig that circulates around the arena during the concert. They also pointed to presence of images in the concerts that borrow from the symbolism of the Nazi Party and Hitlerite National Socialism in a crude attempt to claim that Waters was glorifying and identifying with fascism and the racism of the Nazi movement.

As quoted by Waters in his social media post, the Frankfurt court rejected these accusations and said, "His use of costume parodying the German Third Reich during the show" is "an acceptable use of artistic license to warn us all of the dangers of the current resurgence of fascism in the West."

The court also said Waters "did not glorify or relativize the crimes of the Nazis or identify with Nazi racist ideology." On the question of the significance of the concert venue—Festhalle Frankfurt was the site of the deportation of 3,000 Jews just after Kristallnacht on November 9-10, 1938—the court said the choice of location was "especially poor taste," but the show should go on and be "viewed as a work of art."

While the court apparently failed to specifically state that Roger Waters is not an antisemite, it is evident that the ruling left room for the corporate and state media to continue slandering him as one. For example, in its report on the ruling, *Deutsche Welle* repeated the claim, "Waters' shows often feature giant inflatable pigs emblazoned with aggressive or brooding slogans."

The publication of the German government broadcaster then repeated the false claim that he used

“crude tropes” in the past and then said, “Waters insists he’s not an anti-Semite.” Meanwhile, these pro-imperialist media outlets have linked the campaign to shut down Waters’ European concert dates with his opposition to the war in Ukraine.

A report in *Rolling Stone* on April 25 said, “Waters’ stance on Israel and its occupation of Palestine is one of many geopolitical issues he’s come under fire for in recent years (the other big one lately being his pro-Russia leanings in regard to the war in Ukraine).” In his opposition to the provocation of the war in Ukraine by US-NATO, Waters has been very clear about his opposition to the Putin regime’s militarism and has never articulated a “pro-Russia” position.

Rolling Stone also attempted to bolster lies against Waters by referring to an interview he gave the publication last year in which he said he did not accept the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. The IHRA working definition connects statements that the Israeli state is racist with “physical manifestations of anti-Semitism.”

These same kinds of techniques—which serve to pollute public understanding of the issues in Israel and the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza as well as the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine with confusion and outright falsehoods—are used repeatedly against anyone, especially public figures, who adopts views that do not track with the narratives of the US State Department on these questions.

In his social media post on the Frankfurt court’s decision, Waters elaborated further on his views about the Zionist state and its treatment of Palestinians. He wrote, “In light of this enlightened decision:

“1. Can we please stop conflating criticism of the policies of the government of the apartheid, racist, state of Israel with anti-semitism!

“2. Can we please agree to scrap the absurd IHRA definition of anti-semitism, a worthless piece of paper, whose only possible use is to obfuscate the real meaning of the term?

“3. Can we congratulate the German people for having laws that protect freedom of artistic expression? And urge them to prevail upon their government to please stop using militarized police to ban, and violently put down, peaceful BDS demonstrations organized in support of our oppressed brothers and sisters in Palestine.”

An online campaign launched by podcaster and political commentator Katie Halper demanding that Waters’ performance in Frankfurt be permitted to go forward received more than 36,000 signatures and the endorsement of dozens of prominent artists, musicians and journalists in the weeks leading up to the ruling. News reports said that the Frankfurt city government will appeal the administrative court decision.



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