

German actors, musicians demand Chancellor Merz take action to prevent Israeli atrocities in Gaza

Stefan Steinberg
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Over 350 leading German actors, musicians and cultural workers have issued an appeal, urging German Chancellor Friedrich Merz to intervene to prevent mass starvation in Gaza.

For the first two years of the Israeli war against Palestinians, German media and television outlets restricted imagery of what was taking place in occupied Gaza and the West Bank. More recently, faced with the daily pictures of atrocities emerging on social media, the media in Germany has begun publishing and broadcasting limited reports indicating the spread of starvation across Gaza.

The urgent appeal by actors and cultural workers begins as follows:

Children, emaciated to the bone, their eyes empty, their wrists thin. Babies too weak from hunger to cry. Old, weak, and sick people who don't receive adequate care. Dying in Gaza. Day after day ... Children who are not part of this war—and yet bear its full burden. More than 17,000 have already been killed. Hundreds of thousands are injured, traumatized, displaced, and starving.

The appeal calls upon Chancellor Merz to:

- Immediately stop all German arms exports to Israel
 - Support the suspension of the Association Agreement between the EU and Israel
 - Strongly demand an immediate ceasefire and unhindered access for humanitarian aid

Refuting the main argument used by successive

German governments, that unconditional support for Israel—i.e., for its war crimes and its genocide—is part of German *Staatsräson* (reason of state), the appeal notes:

Continuing to fully support the Israeli government while Gaza is starved and detention camps for hundreds of thousands of people are planned has absolutely nothing to do with German *Staatsräson*.

The list of signees includes some of Germany's best-known actors, such as Daniel Brühl, Sandra Hüller, Peter Lohmeyer, Benno Fürmann, Heike Makatsch, Anna Thalbach, Meret Becker, Jürgen Vogel and Armin Rohde, film directors Fatih Akin and Ari Folman and many more. Musicians include Joy Denalane, Yvonne Catterfeld and the bands Blond, Mighty Oaks and Querbeat.

The appeal by cultural workers follows on the heels of other expressions of public opposition against the genocide in Gaza, including a protest at the *Salzburger Festspiele* in Austria at the end of July. An open letter by 100 Israeli academics warned that the continuing failure by Germany to put pressure on Israel “threatens to enable new atrocities—and undermines the lessons learnt from its own history.”

The academics addressed their letter to two senior Social Democrats (SPD) Rolf Muetzenich and Adis Ahmetovic. The SPD is currently part of the government, a coalition with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU), led by Merz (CDU).

The artists' appeal and open letter undoubtedly reflect the shock and horror of millions in Germany and layers of society in Israel. But such appeals to the German chancellor will have no effect. Merz is not, as the letter states, "one of the few who can persuade Israel to change course after all."

After the administration of Donald Trump, the German government has been the chief enabler of Israel as it moves to the next stage of its goal of establishing a "Greater Israel" on the bones of the Palestinian people. Germany, as well as Britain and France, has continued normal trading relations with Israel, most notably supplying the country with all the weapons it needs to continue its illegal, homicidal war.

Germany is Israel's second-largest arms supplier after the US. Between 2019 and 2023, around 30 percent of Israel's heavy conventional arms imports came from Germany, including corvettes, submarines, tank components and missiles.

On June 2, a report to the Bundestag [German parliament] revealed that the country had provided Israel with nearly half a billion euros' worth of arms since the genocide in Gaza began. The report indicated that

from October 7, 2023, to May 13, 2025, individual export licenses for the final export of military equipment to Israel with a total value of 485,103,796 euros [US\$564 million] were issued. ... The deliveries included, among other things, firearms, ammunition, weapon parts, special equipment for the army and navy, electronic equipment, and special armored vehicles.

In recent weeks, the war criminals in the French and British governments have sought to distance themselves somewhat from Israel's murderous war policy with statements suggesting they are prepared to envisage an independent state of Palestine, although all that remains of Palestinian Gaza after Israeli bombardment is rubble and ruin. Germany, notably, has refused even to go that far.

Yesterday, after Israel's security cabinet announced plans to take over Gaza City permanently, Merz

reluctantly announced that "the German government will not authorize any exports of military equipment that could be used in the Gaza Strip until further notice." But this is a fraud. Merz did not explain what would happen to the weapons whose delivery has already been approved, and he excluded weapons used for the "defence of Israel" outside the Gaza Strip from the delivery stop.

Along with providing the means for repression abroad, the German state has intensified its censorship and repression of pro-Palestinian dissidents at home. The WSWS features a long list of articles dealing with the police state methods employed to censor and silence those, including many Jews, who have voiced opposition to Germany's support for the genocide in Gaza.

In June, the Council of Europe condemned Berlin for its police crackdowns on voices supportive of Palestine, accusing it of contradicting the European Convention on Human Rights and UN human rights treaties by suppressing free speech.

The futile nature of appeals to the German government to take action against Israel was most graphically expressed by the response of Chancellor Merz to the US-backed Israeli bombing of Iran. Merz thanked Benjamin Netanyahu for doing the "dirty work for us all" (*Drecksarbeit*).



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