

Sabine Sparwasser, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Canada  
Dr. Klaus Schmidt, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany  
999 Canada Place, Suite 704  
Vancouver, B.C. V6C 3E1

29 July 2020

Re: Trial of the Humboldt 3 in Moabit Court in Berlin, Germany

Dear Ambassador Sparwasser, Dear Consul Schmidt;

We write today to express our outrage and condemnation at the prosecution by the German state of three activists for Palestinian rights and boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel, known as the Humboldt Three. The three activists, Majed Abusalama, Ronnie Barkan and Dr. Stavit Sinai, are scheduled to appear at Moabit Court in Berlin, Germany, on Monday, August 3.

All three defendants are facing criminal charges on the allegation that they interrupted a speech being given by a direct representative of the Israeli government, Ms. Aliza Lavie, a member of the Israeli Knesset, at Humboldt University in Berlin on June 20, 2017. Majed Abusalama is an award-winning Palestinian journalist and a survivor of Israeli massacres in Gaza; Ronnie Barkan is a Jewish Israeli human rights defender; and Stavit Sinai is a Jewish Israeli scholar of sociology and postcolonial studies.

These three human rights defenders confronted Lavie, who, as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Knesset, approved of the 2014 attack on Gaza under siege, which took the lives of 2200 Palestinians, including 551 children and infants. She represents the Israeli government and, thus, its responsibility for perpetrating war crimes and crimes against humanity, not only in Gaza in 2014, but throughout occupied Palestine for the past 72 years.

Lavie was not held accountable for her role in the deadly actions of the state she represents. Instead, she was given a platform of honor at Humboldt University, while human rights defenders in the audience seeking popular accountability were first thrown out of the room and are now facing criminal charges for doing so. Abusalama, Barkan and Sinai read directly in the room from the report produced by the United Nations' ESCWA that documented Israeli responsibility for the crime of apartheid as defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

We note that this is not the only instance of German state complicity with Israeli war crimes and repression of Palestinian human rights defenders. Not only has the German state defined its support for Israel - and thus its colonization of Palestine, apartheid regime and creeping genocide - as part of its *raison d'etre*, Palestinian activists have faced serious repression and surveillance. Palestinian writer Khaled Barakat, for example, was subjected to a political ban due to his political expression on Palestine, the BDS campaign and the boycott of Israel; he has since been excluded from Germany on the explicit basis of his support for Palestinian rights, including the right to resist occupation and the right to boycott Israel. At the same time, representatives of the Israeli state directly responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including Benjamin Netanyahu and Tzipi Livni, are feted and welcomed - and those who might challenge them threatened with criminal prosecution.

The prosecution of the Humboldt 3 stands particularly starkly, coming as it does following the June 11, 2020, ruling of the European Court of Human Rights, which emphasized that restrictions on the right to engage in campaigns for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement are impermissible violations of the right to freedom of expression.

In this context, we note that the boycott movement internationally highlights not only the Israeli state and its institutions, but also those corporations - and states - that are complicit in or profit from its apartheid, occupation and colonization, such as G4S, HP and Heidelberg Cement. Many people of conscience around the world may also be motivated to boycott German products in an attempt to impose a form of popular accountability to state repression and violence.

We express our strong solidarity with the Humboldt 3, with Khaled Barakat, and with other Palestinian and solidarity human rights defenders targeted by the German state for raising their voices to defend Palestinian rights and challenge Israeli war crimes. We demand that the charges against the Humboldt 3 be dropped immediately and that the German state end these repressive attacks on organizers for justice in Palestine.

Signed,

BDS Vancouver - Coast Salish Territories  
Canada Palestine Association  
Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network

Vancouver