**Top Bundestag Lawmaker to Germany: Boycott Durban III**

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A senior Bundestag deputy on Wednesday called on his country’s Foreign Ministry to drop its planned participation in the UN-sponsored anti-racism Durban commemoration event next month because the conference will attack Israel as an allegedly racist state.  
  
“It can be anticipated that the memorial event on September 22 will be misused as a platform to defame the State of Israel, as happened at the Durban Conference in 2001 and the Durban Review Conference in Geneva in 2009,” Philipp Missfelder, a historian and foreign policy spokesman for Chancellor Angela Merkel’s Christian Democratic Union, told *The Jerusalem Post*.

“Germany should refrain from participating in this conference, as it did in 2009.  
  
We should not support with our attendance a conference at which our partner Israel is denounced as an apartheid state.”  
  
Missfelder appears to be the first deputy to break with German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle’s plan to participate in Durban III. Missfelder, who turned 32 on Thursday, is viewed as a rising star in the CDU. He is an advocate of strong relations with the Jewish state and the United States.  
  
The Durban III event planned for September 22 in New York City commemorates the Durban I conference, which singled out Israel as a human rights violator in its founding document. At Durban I, the streets were filled with signs such as “for the liberation of Quds machine guns based on faith and Islam must be used,” and handouts with Hitler’s photo read, “What if I had won? The good things: There would be no Israel...”  
  
Asked about Missfelder’s call for Germany to skip Durban III, a Foreign Ministry spokesman told the Post on Thursday that the ministry “has read very attentively the statements from deputy Missfelder.”  
  
The spokesman reiterated the ministry’s position that the German government is working to “prevent the Durban process from being used to pillory Israel.”  
  
A spokeswoman from Merkel’s office told the*Post*that the Foreign Ministry’s statement is the “position of the federal government.”  
  
While EU countries such as Italy, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic plan to boycott Durban III because the conference will be a showcase for contemporary hatred of Israel and Jews, critics accuse Merkel’s administration of propping up an event designed to strip Israel’s of its legitimacy and to fan the flames of Jew-hatred.  
  
Anne Bayefsky, a human rights scholar and activist, is the main organizer of a counter-Durban III event planned for New York with Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, told the *Post*, “It is appalling that any German leader would want to participate in Durban III – It is specifically intended to ‘commemorate’ an event steeped in anti-Semitism and it will repeat and celebrate egregious discrimination against Israel.  
  
“Labeling the Jewish state racist harks back to an era which the German government should be doing everything in their power to condemn – starting with boycotting this centerpiece of UN-based hate-mongering,” said Bayefsky, who directs the Touro College Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust and is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute in New York.  
  
In a sign of growing tension over Durban III with Germany’s organized Jewish community, Dr. Dieter Graumann, the head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, told the local media that it is long overdue that Germany boycott Durban III.  
  
Durban III is a “disgusting show trial” that once again will place Israel alone in the dock, he said.

Graumann wrote a letter calling for Westerwelle to pull out of the conference because it is a “festival of hostility toward Jews.” It is imperative that Germany show clarity and consistency in terms of combating loathing of Jews, he said. “Germany must not give this hate campaign the appearance of legitimacy.”  
  
Responding to Westerwelle’s decision to ignore his letter and boycott call, Graumann told the DAPD wire service on Monday, “Maybe something will still come – better still, something will happen.”  
  
The Foreign Ministry in Berlin told the*Post* that Graumann’s letter will be answered.  
  
Merkel’s CDU and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union, is split. On the one hand, there are deputies who support strengthening ties with Israel and the US. On the other hand, there are CDU-CSU deputies who promote relations with Israel’s enemies such as Iran.