Germany’s Jews calls on Merkel to boycott Durban III

August 23, 2011

By Benjamin Weinthal

The Jerusalem Post
https://web.archive.org/web/20110823185316/http://www.jpost.com/International/Article.aspx?id=235000

Head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany: Germany ought to not give this campaign of hate the appearance of legitimacy.

BERLIN – Dieter Graumann, the head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, called on Berlin Monday to stay away from the slated September UN anti-racism conference, Durban III, because the event spreads hatred of Jews.

Graumann told the DAPD wire service that the “German government has up until now remained silent,” and the Durban III conference is a “festival of hostility toward Jews.” He said “Germany ought to not give this campaign of hate the appearance of legitimacy.”

The September 22 Durban III event commemorates the 10th anniversary of the Durban I conference, which took place in Durban, South Africa. It was widely denounced as an anti-Semitic, UN-sponsored event that singled out Jews and Israel in order to attack them, including calls to eliminate Israel.

Graumann criticized Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle for failing to answer his letter, requesting Germany walk away from Durban III.

Graumann highlighted the presence of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the Durban II conference in Geneva in 2009. Ahmadinejad denied the Holocaust and called for Israel’s destruction.

After considerable public pressure Germany’s government, under previous foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeir, pulled out of the conference at the 11th hour.

Westerwelle has been accused of having a blind spot toward anti-Semitism.

In 2002, his Free Democratic Party tolerated the first openly anti-Semitic election campaign since the Hitler period.

Westerwelle refused to censure and rope in then-top FDP official and German- Arab friendship society head Juergen Moellemann for mass-mailing an election flyer demonizing prime minister Ariel Sharon for “violating resolutions of the UN Security Council.”

Italy, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands have declared they will not participate in Durban III. The US, Canada and Israel are also boycotting the event.