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Davos: Intimidation must not be tolerated

The Secretary General of Amnesty International has today urged the Swiss authorities to guarantee freedom of expression at Davos following the attempted deportation of Adam Ma'anit, a representative of a Dutch nongovernmental organization who was due to speak at a debate on business ethics.

Pierre Sané, who is representing Amnesty International in Davos, said today: "Intimidation cannot be tolerated. People must be allowed to express their opinions, no matter what those opinions are. The credibility of the Davos meeting is threatened if debate is stifled. People interested in making progress in Davos will be rightly concerned."

Adam Ma'anit was stopped by police on the morning of Friday 26 January while on his way to a forum, organized by nongovernmental organizations taking place in Davos parallel to the World Economic Forum. According to the organizers of the parallel forum, he was stopped at a train station in Lanquart by security forces where he was searched, questioned and photographed before being taken back to the border at Basel.

"The Swiss authorities simply must protect the right to free expression and peaceful demonstration," Pierre Sané added. "The participation of campaigning organizations like Amnesty International at the Davos meeting must not be used as a pretext to prevent peaceful demonstrators also having their say."

Adam Ma'anit was due to give a speech to the "Public eye on Davos" forum, hosted by the organization Erklärung von Bern. His speech was entitled "Business under Control - Who owes responsibility to multinational firms?"

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Pierre Sané is available for interview.*

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