
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ORAL STATEMENT

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GERMANY AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Sixty-second session of the Human Rights Council, 15 June–10 July 2026

Mr. President,

Madam Rapporteur,

Antisemitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia and other forms of racism and hatred require robust responses. Yet, we share concerns that Germany is increasingly resorting to criminalization and security-driven policies. Yes, Germany is at a critical juncture for freedom of expression.

For instance: Climate activists face the misuse of criminal law and surveillance measures against peaceful civil disobedience.

Anti-terrorism and security measures are used to unduly restrict solidarity with Palestinians and advocacy for their rights. Civil society organizations, activists, academics and artists report restrictions on peaceful protests, arbitrary arrests and detentions, threats of deportation, and raids on activists' homes. Conferences, lectures and cultural events have been cancelled or restricted. This contributes to self-censorship and a chilling effect.

We are particularly concerned by the conflation of legitimate criticism of Israel's violations of international law with growing antisemitism. Any genuine measures to eradicate it must not restrict protected speech or treat support for BDS as inherently unlawful or discriminatory. It is crucial that responses to any form of racism be firmly grounded in international human rights standards. We endorse the recommendation of Germany establishing a national independent fact-finding commission to examine these concerns and identify best practices.

Germany has a dual responsibility: to protect individuals from hatred and discrimination, while safeguarding freedom of expression.

Thank you.