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# German mayor nixes ‘one-sided’ Nakba exhibit

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**“From the perspective of the city of Freiburg, the presentation is one-sided,” says mayor; organizer turns to court, closure overturned.**

Talkbacks (6)

**BERLIN** – The mayor of **Freiburg**, Dieter Salomon, pulled the plug on a Palestinian “Nakba” exhibit, which was slated to open on Friday in the local library, because “from the perspective of the city of Freiburg, the presentation is one-sided,” Edith Lamersdorf, the mayor’s spokeswoman, told *The Jerusalem Post* on Tuesday.

The Café Palestine group filed a law suit against the municipality, and on Wednesday a court there ruled that the exhibit can be displayed. “The exhibit does not violate penal law with regard to content and is protected by freedom of speech,” the court said in a statement.

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“We accept the decision,” Lamersdorf said.

It is unclear why the city of Freiburg will not appeal the court's ruling.

“We will show the exhibit, but we stand by what we said about the content, that it is a one-sided presentation,” Salomon told the *Badische Zeitung* local newspaper.

“One-sided accusations and friend-foe paradigms do not promote insight into the complicated relationships in the Middle East or contribute to understanding and peaceful development in the region,” the Green Party’s Salomon said in a statement last week.

“Palestinian Arabs do not appear in the presentation as responsible and active actors in this conflict. There is, for example, no discussion of the anti-Semitic motivated Arab pogroms that took place since the mid-19th century, and especially after 1945, in the Jewish settlement areas in the Arab regions. The other ‘Nakba’ [catastrophe] meant flight and expulsion for hundreds of thousands of Arab Jews, who had to leave their homes and were taken in by

Israel,” the mayor said.

Dr. Gabriele Weber, one of the organizers of the exhibit, told the *Post* on Tuesday that “there is no reason to cancel the exhibit,” because there “was an exhibit about Baden Jews who were deported” during the Holocaust, which was displayed in the city library.

Freiburg is a university town in the southern state of Baden-Württemberg.

According to Weber, the “Israel Lobby” in **Germany** is responsible for the cancellation, because there is a “mechanism that applied pressure to cancel the exhibit.”

Weber named the media watchdog organization Honestly Concerned, which tracks anti-Semitic and anti-Israel reports in the German media, as “part of the Israel Lobby.” She declined to provide names.

Andrea Lauser, from the board of the German-Israel Friendship Society in Freiburg, told the *Post* that “‘Israel Lobby’ is a typical term that is applied in an anti-Semitic manner to show that the Jewish state is behind everything.”

The society did not play a role in the removal of the exhibit; the city of Freiburg initiated the cancellation of the slanted pro-Palestinian exhibit, Lauser said.

Elisabeth Burkard and Ursula Fiedler, also from the Friendship Society’s board, said in a statement that the society “is relieved that the city of Freiburg has canceled the exhibition ‘The Nakba – Flight and Expulsion of the Palestinians 1948’ at the city library. The cancellation was explained by the fact that the exhibit would have ignored historic facts and replaced them with emotions that incite hatred and deepen the gulf between Israelis and Arabs.”

Weber, a leading member of the group Café Palestine, cast doubt on Israel’s right to exist and moderated and supported a conference in Stuttgart whose program stated: “We want to investigate the one-state solution, which we consider to be a realistic and humane model,” according to the local newspaper *Der Sonntag*.

Weber told the *Post* that her “husband is Palestinian.”

Pro-Israel observers welcomed Salomon’s decision as an important effort to counter growing hatred of the Jewish state and attempts to delegitimize Israel in Germany.

Salomon further justified the decision to not show the exhibit by saying, “Also unmentioned is the fact that Hitlerite Germany wanted to prevent the founding of the State of Israel and thus closely cooperated with the Palestinian Arabs, above all with the spiritual and political leader and grand mufti of Jerusalem, Muhammad Amin al-Husseini, and supported him both ideologically and substantively. And there is no mention of the fact that the neighboring Arab states called on the Palestinians to evacuate the battle areas before the attack on Israel in 1948. For decades, the Palestinian refugees have constituted political pawns, serving the Arab states as political and moral leverage against Israel.”

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