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## LETTER IN SUPPORT OF DR. ANNA-ESTHER YOUNES

### Against the Repression of Academic Freedom and For Democracy in The Sciences

We the undersigned scholars, activists and organisations, stand in solidarity with Dr. Anna-Esther Younes, a German-Palestinian critical race and post-colonial scholar, who has faced discrimination and smearing in Germany due to her academic and personal expressions on Palestinian rights. Just as strongly as we support the struggle against all forms of racism, including antisemitism and anti-Muslim racism, we condemn repression in Germany that targets advocates of Palestinian freedom, justice and equality in harmony with international law and universal human rights principles.

We are alarmed by recent efforts to exclude Dr. Anna-Esther Younes from academia and from the public debate in Germany. In November 2019, the [Berlin Department for Research and Information on Antisemitism](#) (RIAS) prepared a secret file that patches together distorted selections of Dr. Younes's [writings to defame her](#). Highlighting her support for the BDS movement as her true sin, RIAS's file is effectively a daunting attack on Dr. Younes's scholarship and a real threat to her academic career. The purpose and method of information collection and sharing by RIAS did not respect Dr. Younes's fundamental right to privacy and resembles State surveillance through a state-funded civil society organization.

Defending the critical scholarship of Dr. Younes and others against similar attacks in Germany that "preemptively condemn them on the basis of decontextualized information, hearsay, and guilt by association," [Jewish Voice for Just Peace in the Middle East](#) said: "We need more, not less, critical analyses that shed light on the phenomenon of Islamophobia and its connection to antisemitism, as do those of [Anna-Esther] Younes."

Unfortunately, such attacks [are not rare](#) in Germany. They are part of a broader anti-democratic pattern of [misinformation](#) and [repression](#) against [academics, artists, writers](#) and activists - [including Jewish-Israelis](#) - who advocate for Palestinian rights in Germany, or what Brian Eno calls, "[a new McCarthyism](#)." Rising attempts to silence critical and particularly minority voices in Germany have a common denominator: anti-Palestinian racism cloaked in anti-BDS positions.

In 2019, the German Bundestag adopted an anti-BDS [resolution](#) that blurs the lines between actual anti-Jewish bigotry and legitimate criticism of Israel's illegal policies, directly referencing the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's deeply troubling and controversial definition](#) of antisemitism (IHRA-WDA). The resolution urged public institutions to deny BDS initiatives financial support and public spaces. Anti-BDS resolutions have been adopted on the regional and local levels as well,

creating a discriminatory environment and a shrinking space for advocacy of Palestinian rights.

More than [240 Jewish and Jewish-Israeli scholars](#), among them world authorities on antisemitism and the history of the Holocaust, have condemned the Bundestag's "deceitful" anti-BDS declaration. Citing the [BDS movement's opposition to all forms of racism, including antisemitism](#), and calling BDS, "a legitimate, and nonviolent tool of resistance," they wrote: "the three main goals of BDS -- ending the occupation, full equality to the [Palestinian] Arab citizens of Israel and the right of return of Palestinian refugees -- adhere to international law ... ." A [similar letter](#), signed by Younes and renown international scholars, was addressed to the German parliament and government also appears in her file as proof of her misdeeds.

[Hundreds of international scholars](#) have condemned German anti-BDS resolutions as an "unreasonable, disproportionate and unlawful limitation of the right to freedom of expression, association and assembly of human rights defenders." They have [pledged](#) not to serve on juries or prize committees or in academic hiring consultations in Germany whenever there are "convincing indicators that their decisions may be subject to ideological or political interference or litmus tests," particularly those related support for nonviolent resistance, including BDS.

The [European Court of Human Rights \(ECtHR\)](#) last year rejected the criminalization of boycotts directed against Israel in support of Palestinian rights and affirmed [BDS as a legitimate exercise of freedom of expression](#).

Based on the above, and irrespective of our diverse positions on supporting BDS, we strongly urge Germany and German institutions to respect academic freedom and freedom of expression, to heed the findings of the ECtHR, and to firmly end repression against Anna-Esther Younes and all other advocates of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as stipulated in international law, including through the peaceful tactics of BDS.