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BY MARCY WINOGRAD

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## Stop US & German Arms for Israel's Genocide!



[CODEPINK and other peace activists outside the German Consulate in Los Angeles/Ryan Wentz — CODEPINK]

From coast to coast, CODEPINK delegations protested at German diplomatic missions in support of Nicaragua's case against Germany at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for complicity in Israel's genocide that has killed or maimed over 100,000 Palestinians in Gaza.

On the first day of ICJ proceedings, April 8, 2024, in Nicaragua v. Germany, pickets and letter deliveries took place in DC, NYC, LA, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, Houston, Miami and Seattle. Demonstrators echoed Nicaragua's requests of the World Court to order Germany and the United States to stop supplying weapons to Israel. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the US supplies 69% of Israel's arsenal; Germany supplies 30% of the weaponry.

Benjamin Alvarez Gruber, US correspondent for Deutsche Welle (DW), state-owned German state-television, covered the story at the DC German embassy, where CODEPINK

organizers Medea Benjamin, Julia Norman and Palestinian American Motaz Salim led the delegation. Participants headed into the embassy office to deliver a “stop the arms, restore UNRWA aid” letter from CODEPINK. “We were fed a lot of formality,” said Norman, summarizing the embassy’s response for the crowd, “there needs to be a lot of investigations ... investigations take a lot of time ... there’s no way to prove yet that war crimes are occurring.”

“Shame, shame,” cried the crowd outside the embassy.

Norman continued, “While there was a sense of grief in that room, there was no sense of urgency.”

This despite the threat of mass starvation looming over Gaza as a result of Israel’s refusal to allow food, water and medicine into the densely populated coastal strip.

“It also leads me to believe that they are in total support of what’s going on,” Salim added.



[D.C. peace activists outside Germany Embassy] Michelle Ellner — CODEPINK]

In Los Angeles, an angry defender of Israel’s genocide confronted a protester before the action began, and when it looked like an assault might be imminent, building security called the police. Five officers responded, lining up patrol cars in front of the consulate building, as fifty picketers—some driving three hours to participate in the protest — chanted in front of the office building housing the German consulate on the fifth floor. Palestinian American Mirvette Judeh, whose family is from the West Bank, told the crowd it was the power of the people’s protests that propelled 40 members of Congress, including former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, to sign a letter to President Biden calling for a halt to weapons shipments to Israel. When it came time to deliver the CODEPINK letter to German Consul General Andrea Sasse, the building security guard allowed only one member of the delegation, Judeh, up to the fifth floor.



[Mirvette Judeh speaking outside German Consulate in Los Angeles | Rick Chertoff]

While the doors to the consulate had earlier swung open to visitors, Mirvette said they were shut tight when she arrived with the letter for the German Consul General. She knocked. The door opened. “I said could I speak to someone about Germany needing to stop funding the genocide and ethnic cleansing, and providing weapons and support to Israel, and they said, ‘If you keep talking, we’re not going to deliver the letter.’”

Later the Israel defender returned with three menacing others spewing four-letter words, itching for a fight and videotaping protesters.

Three Dubai women visiting relatives in San Diego drove three hours to participate in the protest. “We are forbidden from protesting in Dubai,” said the women, CODEPINK Instagram followers anxious to participate in another action.

In San Francisco, twenty picketers gathered in front of the German consulate in the city’s posh neighborhood of Pacific Heights, where CODEPINK participants took turns reading the letter, discussing the genocide, and attempting to go inside the consulate to deliver the letter. “The security guard asked the consulate staff if we could come in and the staff declined to allow that, but the guard took the letter inside for us and we confirmed that the staff received



it and would pass it along to the Consul,” said Cynthia Papermaster, organizer of the delegation.



[CODEPINK San Francisco members outside German Consulate in San Francisco | Phil Pasquini]

In Chicago, a 10-member delegation of Muslims and Jews met for over an hour with Michael Ahrens, German Consul General, who began the meeting saying Israel had a right to defend itself but listened intently and took notes while participants told heartbreaking stories from both Gaza and the West Bank.



[Peace activists outside German Consulate in Chicago]

In New York City, the German mission’s First Secretary Daniel Drescher came down to the street to meet with the CODEPINK delegation and receive their letter. Participant Leigha Gillespea spoke of the harm resulting from Germany’s UNRWA defunding, which was based on testimony now debunked as false confessions made under Israeli torture.

The German mission diplomat said no funding had actually been cut because this year's budget had already been allocated. Gillespea retorted, "Then why did you announce that you were cutting the funding instead of merely investigating the allegations?"

Delegation organizer Robert Jereski said, "He had no sound answer and clearly understood the damage that Germany's contribution to the campaign against UNRWA had done. He also had no answer to the disparate response of Germany to Israel's bald allegations against UNRWA and the ICJ's finding of plausible genocide, especially where the former had no proof while the decision of the highest court was replete with evidence."

Imam Catovic, a former diplomat originally from Bosnia, who joined the Code Pink picket, urged the First Secretary to recognize that Germany's own history makes it particularly well placed to condemn genocide whenever and wherever it takes place, and that Germany's guilty conscience should not cloud judgement about what is right, echoing the position of the Jewish activists present that Germany's policies do not align with Jewish values or safety. They all underscored that a demand to end Palestine suffering is not antithetical to Jewish safety but in fact a requirement for the safety of all people.



[New York delegation of peace activists speaking with German UN Mission's First Secretary Daniel Drescher | Maha Alami]

In Seattle, a contingent delivered the CODEPINK letter to the honorary consulate, where a staffer welcomed antiwar activists into the office, only to have the Honorary Consul General Uli Fischer,, formerly in the German Air Force and a retired Boeing employee, refuse to meet with them. Nevertheless, participants said they could see through a crack in the door that the Consul General was reading the letter also signed by Veterans for Peace and the Seattle Antiwar Coalition.



[Seattle peace activists outside German Consulate]

In Boston, activists with Massachusetts Peace Action delivered the letter to the German consulate.

The pickets, rallies, and petition deliveries were part of an international call for solidarity with Palestinian-Germans who risk beatings and arrest when they protest Germany's complicity in Israel's slaughter in Gaza. Without US and German weapons, Israel's genocide might well come to an end, sparing the lives of over a million Palestinians uprooted from their homes to struggle with mass starvation.

Marcy Winograd is a retired public school teacher and author from California. She is the Coordinator of **CODEPINK Congress** and the **Peace in Ukraine Coalition**, which is planning a week of action September 12th-15th to end the war.

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