

Honorable Ambassador Von Goetze,

We, the undersigned organizations, express our appreciation for the steadfast commitment of German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel, to meeting with members of Israel's civil society and human rights organizations, despite pressure to do otherwise by Prime Minister Netanyahu. We value Minister Gabriel's efforts to hear all voices, and to receive data and information based on the organizations' experience and knowledge.

The Foreign Minister's decision demonstrates Germany's commitment to supporting the State of Israel as a democratic society, in which human rights and freedom of speech are essential values.

Recent Israeli legislation of the "NGO Law" and the "Suspension Law" reflects the growing restrictions on freedom of expression and minorities' rights, and is combined with government-led and right-wing organizations' campaigns to silence and de-legitimize civil society organizations, portraying them as "anti-Israeli", and trying to pressure foreign governments to cut ties with organizations that criticize the government's policies.

As Israel enters its 50th

year of occupation, the already limited space in which our organizations can operate is shrinking. We therefore view the Foreign Minister's decision to stand unequivocally on the side of democratic values, human rights and free speech as proof of Germany's commitment to these values and its true friendship with Israel. Ultimately, as organizations that care deeply about the societies in which we work, we believe that only by ending the occupation can we ensure a better future for Israelis and Palestinians.

Akevot - Institute for Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Research

Amnesty International Israel

Bimkom-Planners for Planning Rights

Combatants for peace

Emek Shaveh

Gisha

Haqel (The Field)-Jews and Arabs in Defense of Human Rights

Hamoked – Center for the Defense of the Individual

Human Rights Defenders Fund

Ir Amim

Physicians for Human Rights - Israel

Public Committee Against Torture in Israel

Rabbis for Human Rights
Yesh Din - volunteers for human rights
