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PRESS RELEASE

Petition: “Boycott Durban 2!”

Nearly seven years ago, the, UN World Conference against Racism met in Durban South Africa. The official aim of the event was the public recognition of slavery and colonialism as crimes. However, the conference mutated into an upright tribunal against Israel and its right to exist as well as defense for unfree states and dictators. Now, the United Nations plans a Durban Review Conference to take place in April 2009. A group of intellectuals urges European governments to call off their participation in this event/conference.

Recently, French novelist and essayist, Pascal Bruckner has already called to boycott the Durban Review Conference. “Anti-Semitism has become an ideology of the totalitarian movements in the UN, which they use for their own goals”, Bruckner explains his appeal. “Dictators and notorious semi-dictators abuse democratic language and instrumentalize legal standards, bringing them against democracies, without ever questioning themselves. Bruckner says that a “new inquisition” has emerged, using the term “religious slander to oppress any expression of doubt, especially in Muslim countries.” The Antiracism defended by the despots serves “to justify the very same things against which it was originally devised: oppression, prejudice and inequality”.

More than 30 journalists, authors, scientists and artists, In Europe, the United States and the Middle East have joined Bruckner’s petition, among them: **Lars Gustafsson, Jeffrey Herf, Benny Morris, Peter Schneider, Seyran Ates, Necla Kelek and Ralph Giordano.** They call the European Union member states, and especially Germany, to boycott the “Durban 2” Conference and to push forward a comprehensive reform of the UN Human Rights Commission.

For the initiators and supporters of the petition, the aim is democratization, secularization and universal protection of human rights against the pretended cultural-pluralism, which boils down to defending Islamic Shari’a against individual freedom. The Durban follow-up conference is diametrically opposed to this goal. Additionally, there is a fear of a renewed demonization of Israel, which democrats must confront determinedly. Anti-Semitism goes hand and hand with the support for dictatorships, such as in Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Instead of supporting the “Durban 2” conference, it is time to return to the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, we call for a deep reform of the UN Human Rights Commission, which becomes more and more a forum for diffusion of Anti-Semitism, misogyny and unfreedom.

The initiators and supporters of the appeal hope that it will receive wide support. The petition will be delivered to the German government and to the governments of other EU countries on February 15th, 2009 and needs as many signatures as possible by this date.

Nasrin Amirsedghi, Author
Thomas von der Osten-Sacken, Director „Wadi e.V.“
Alex Feuerherdt, Journalist

The further signatories

Please find and sign the petition online, in English and German at

<http://boycottdurban2.wordpress.com>

