**Berlin Still Has Not Pulled Out Of ‘Anti-Israel’ Durban III**

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Germany’s Foreign Ministry is moving forward with preparations for the September Durban III anti-racism conference in New York City, a UN-sponsored event that presumably will single out Israel for attacks, as have previous “Durban” events.

In addition, speaking last week in the UN Security Council, a German Foreign Ministry undersecretary blasted Israel for its construction of settlements in the West Bank.

When asked if Germany planned to participate in Durban III, a German Foreign Ministry spokeswoman told *The Jerusalem Post* on Friday that the federal government “will decide on its participation in the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the international racism conference in light of the ongoing preparatory negotiations.”

The spokeswoman added that the German government was “against racism and all other forms of discrimination.

In the context of the international racism conference, [Germany] works to ensure that no individual countries are separately pilloried.”

Last April, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and German Chancellor Angela Merkel sought to repair relations that had been strained by Berlin’s criticism of the way Israel has been addressing the Middle East peace process. There were also reports of heated exchanges between the two leaders.

Anne Bayefsky, director of the Touro College Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust, and a Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute, told the *Post* on Friday that the excuse given by Germany for not staying away from the conference, as the Czech Republic, Italy and the Netherlands plan to do, “simply does not stand up to scrutiny.”

“German representatives know that Israel is already ‘separately pilloried’ in the Durban Declaration and the co-chairs of the preparatory negotiations have already said explicitly that the Durban Declaration will not be ‘reopened.’ So the question remains: Why is Germany, of all countries, still contemplating celebrating the 10th anniversary of an anti-Semitic hatefest?” Bayefsky asked.

The main political declaration from Durban I, which also formed the basis for Durban II, held in Geneva in 2009, targets only Israel as a violator of human rights and lists the Palestinians as the victims of racism.

The Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Italy pulled out of Durban III last week. According to the online Prague Daily Monitor, the Czech government walked away from the event because of “unacceptable statements with anti-Jewish connotations.”

Canada was the first country to pull the plug on Durban III, in November.

Jason Kenney, Canadian minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, told the Post in June that the Durban process “sullies the reputation of the UN.”

In a reference to the 2009 conference, Kenney said that “a conference that gives a platform to [Iranian President] Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to advocate genocide is a sick joke.” He called on Navi Pillay, the UN high commissioner for human rights who will be overseeing Durban III, to “stop the process and realize that the poison at Durban I “has placed the entire process under a permanent cloud.”

The United States and Israel are boycotting the Durban III conference.

Bayefsky told the Post that “Germany’s behavior toward the UN’s Durban III conference raises serious questions about its commitment to combat modern anti-Semitism. As an event which will commemorate the hatefest held in Durban in 2001, and its Durban Declaration, which singles out only one country on Earth – the Jewish state – it is shocking that Germany has not refused unequivocally to withdraw in solidarity with Israel, the United States, Canada, Italy and other European nations.”

Meanwhile, Werner Hoyer, a German Foreign Ministry undersecretary from the pro-business and traditionally Arab-friendly Free Democratic Party, told the UN Security Council last week that “Germany is deeply concerned about the ongoing apartment construction” in the West Bank. He said the building of apartments “violates international law and is a hurdle for peace and a danger for the two-state solution. All of these activities must immediately be stopped.”

The spokeswoman for the German Foreign Ministry told the *Post* that both sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict “are called upon to live up to their responsibilities and rapidly resume negotiations. One-sided steps on both sides are counterproductive.

This is true of Palestinian as well as Israeli actions.”