

**Mideast Freedom Forum Berlin
Policy Paper**

**Recommendations for a German Foreign Policy regarding
Gaza and the Middle East after October 7, 2023**

This policy paper makes recommendations for a day-after-policy for Gaza, the Iranian regime, the Palestinian Authority and the region as a whole. It initially focuses on changes to the German-funded UNRWA education policy in Gaza and then looks at the future of the region and the contribution Germany could make.

It has been well known for many years that schools in the Gaza Strip openly call for violence, reject peace, glorify "martyrdom" and demonise both Israel and the Jewish people. This applies to both Hamas-run and UNRWA-run schools, all of which are based on the Palestinian Authority's curriculum, which is full of hatred and incitement.

Unfortunately, it is no longer mere speculation that what students in Gaza learn and hear in school and from their teachers translates into terror. On 7 October, an estimated 3,000 terrorists carried out murders, rapes, beheadings and kidnappings of Israelis. It can be assumed that they are all graduates of schools in the Gaza Strip. It is clearer than ever that there is a systemic problem that needs to be addressed and resolved with the utmost urgency.

It can be assumed that Israel will no longer leave education matters in the Gaza Strip in the hands of UNRWA after the fall of Hamas. As Germany is currently the second largest single donor to UNRWA, the German government should work to ensure that education in schools in the Gaza Strip is free of hatred and promotes understanding and tolerance.

In order to facilitate a long-term stable reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians, German foreign policy should consider the measures below in an interim phase towards a two-state solution in the future.

Policy Recommendations Palestinian Territories:

- Germany should lobby the United Nations to place UNRWA education operations in the Gaza Strip in the hands of other institutions that are committed to and implement the UNESCO principles of peace and tolerance. According to the organisation Impact-SE, the teaching materials used in UNRWA schools to date have not met these standards (<https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/UNRWA-Education-Textbooks-and-Terror-Nov-2023.pdf>).

- After the fall of Hamas in Gaza, Germany should finally take a stand against the use of hate-spreading textbooks by the Palestinian Authority and should support the use of newly written textbooks for pupils in Gaza that are based on the UNESCO Principles of Peace and Tolerance.
- Germany should coordinate with the Israeli government on who should write these new textbooks and support any institution that wants to start this reform endeavour based on the UNESCO Principles of Peace and Tolerance.
- The German government's long-term goal of a two-state solution can only be achieved after a prolonged peaceful interim period and a fundamental reform of the Palestinian Authority.
- The prospect of a two-state solution by the German government and other actors must not appear to be a reward for terror and must be clearly linked to a longer terror-free, peaceful interim phase and the aforementioned reform of the Palestinian Authority.
- For the coming interim period, Germany should support Israeli control of security matters in the Gaza Strip. This would be in line with the right to self-defence emphasised by the Foreign Minister.
- The parliamentary elections in the Palestinian Authority in 2006, which were forced by the USA, took place shortly after the end of the Second Intifada. This period was characterised by terrorist attacks and Israeli military countermeasures, but also by violence within the Palestinian Authority. A free press and a democratic opinion-forming process before the elections were hardly possible. The result of the 2006 parliamentary elections was an absolute majority in favour of Hamas. Germany and the international community should not exert any pressure for such immediate new elections in the Palestinian territories. Elections only appear to make sense once reforms in the Palestinian Authority enable a democratic opinion-forming process and a non-violent period of calm has proven to be stable.
- Germany should work in close coordination with Israel to ensure that democratic Palestinian actors who are in favour of a settlement with Israel and renounce violence as a political tool, as well as Arab states that are in favour of a settlement with Israel, participate in the civilian control of the Gaza Strip after the end of the war against Hamas.
- Germany should use its influence on the Palestinian Authority to stop the Palestinian Authority's "martyrdom pension and prisoner payment programmes". Since 7 October, a further 3550 prisoners in Israeli jails have been added to the programme (now 8800 in total), including 661 Hamas terrorists (<https://palwatch.org/page/34924>). These payments by the PA to convicted terrorists and their families represent an incentive to terrorism that should not be underestimated. Germany should make parts of the funding of the Palestinian Authority dependent on progress in the abolition of these payments.

Policy recommendations Middle East region:

- Germany should continue to support the Abraham Accords in close coordination with Israel and look for ways in which Saudi Arabia and other Arab states can achieve reconciliation with Israel.
- Germany should initiate educational projects in Arab states that are critical of antisemitism together with the governments there and support them in the long

term.

- The regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the main cause of the current conflicts in the Middle East and supports terrorist groups in the region militarily and financially with the aim of destroying the Jewish state of Israel. Without a change of regime in Iran, Israel's security is at risk and a two-state solution is impossible, as the Islamic Republic of Iran systematically undermines any solution with Israel by military and terrorist means. Germany should therefore work in close coordination with all partners in the region to push back Iranian influence in the region as far as possible.
- The Islamic Republic of Iran is striving for nuclear weapons and is violating the nuclear treaty (JCPOA) and the Non-Proliferation Treaty by developing nuclear weapons. As part of its obligations under the JCPOA nuclear deal, Germany should trigger the snap-back option at the United Nations. This would weaken the Iranian regime, which would also have an impact on Iranian arms exports to its proxies in the Middle East (Hamas, Hezbollah, Houthis, etc.) and the export of drones used by Russia against Ukraine.
- The German government should immediately work towards the listing of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation with the European Union. The IRGC are the main Iranian terror exporters in terms of weapons, finance, training and logistics.

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