

Translation

PRESS STATEMENT

Tel Aviv, Tuesday, 17 October 2023

Subject: The Federal Chancellor's visit to the State of Israel

Speaker: Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz

CHANCELLOR SCHOLZ: Prime Minister, first of all, let me thank you for our good, intensive and very serious discussion. We are visiting friends in difficult times, and as I said last week in the German Bundestag: There can only be one place for Germany in such difficult times – and that is by Israel's side.

Prime Minister, the security of Israel and of its people is part of Germany's *raison d'état*. The Federal Government acts in accordance with this maxim; the German Bundestag supports this policy across party lines. For me, it is important to say this clearly here today, in Israel, in this difficult situation: Germany's history and our responsibility deriving from the Holocaust make it our duty to stand up for the existence and security of the State of Israel.

Ladies and gentlemen, we most vehemently condemn the bloody, horrendous attack that Hamas terrorists perpetrated on Israel. Brutal terror directed at innocent civilians, the execution of defenceless citizens, the murder of infants, the abduction of women, men and children, and the humiliation and parading of Holocaust survivors – all this makes our blood run cold.

It is absolutely clear that Israel has the right under international law to defend itself against this terror. A state – every state – has a duty to protect its nationals.

We feel with all Israelis who have suffered the terrible loss of their parents, siblings and children in this barbaric attack. We sense the unbearable anxiety of all those whose family members have been torn out of their everyday lives and brutally abducted by terrorists. Among the abducted are German nationals. We are focused on them and on everyone who is being held hostage. We are doing all we can to obtain their release.

Prime Minister, my government is doing everything in its power to keep this conflict from escalating. The task at hand is to prevent a regional conflagration. And I expressly warn that no actor should consider it a good idea now to interfere in this conflict from outside. It would be a grave and unforgivable mistake. Over the last few days, we have sent this message out through various channels, to those who are meant to receive it.

Prime Minister, Germany and Israel have in common that we are democratic states built on the rule of law. In extreme situations, as well, our actions are rooted in law and order. It is also for this reason that we are not indifferent to the humanitarian suffering in the Gaza Strip. I just spoke with the Prime Minister about how people in Gaza can most rapidly be provided with humanitarian assistance. Unlike Hamas, which wants to keep the people of Gaza captive and use them as human shields, we are also worried

about them. We want to protect civilians and prevent civilian casualties. I spoke with Prime Minister Netanyahu about the possibility of improving humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip. For this reason, as well, I will travel on to Egypt next, where I will meet with President El-Sisi tomorrow, and our discussions will also address humanitarian aspects. The Federal Government will continue its humanitarian engagement for Gaza, so that the suffering of the civilian population can be alleviated.

Allow me to conclude with two comments on the situation in Germany:

There is no room for antisemitism in Germany. Glorifying or celebrating violence is inhumane and despicable. It is forbidden, and it will be punished.

Jewish life in Germany is a gift. We will protect Jewish institutions.

Thank you.