

# Merkel Party's think tank compares Israel's security wall to Berlin wall

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- > Envoy gets anti-Israel talk at Berlin Jewish museum canceled
- > Merkel, Putin to meet outside Berlin next week, German spokesman says



A watch tower is pictured at the former East German border in the village of Moedlareuth, about 300 kilometres (186 miles) south of Berlin, Germany August 31, 2017. The Wall in the village of Moedlareuth, separating East from West Germany, was built in 1966. It was 700 meters long and 3.40 meters hi. (photo credit: REUTERS/MICHAEL DALDER)

The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation - a think tank for German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union party - compared on Monday the now-defunct East German communist state's Berlin Wall with Israel's separation wall along the West Bank, sparking outrage in Israel and Germany.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation “fails to distinguish between justified and non-justified walls,” Dr. Efraim Zuroff, head of the Jerusalem office of Jewish human rights organization Simon Wiesenthal Center, told *The Jerusalem Post*. He added that Israel's wall was “built to save lives and stop terrorism,” and it “has saved many lives.”

The Adenauer wrote on Facebook, “57 years ago began work on the Berlin Wall. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall 1989, some 50 new walls and barricades were developed.” The Facebook post shows photographs of a selection of walls and barricades, including Israel and the Palestinian territories. The US and Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Morocco and Spain, India and Bangladesh, Morocco and Western Sahara, are some of the other photographs shown.

After outrage on Twitter and on Facebook, the Adenauer Foundation wrote, "We have decided to remove the [collage] originally shown here to prevent further misunderstandings.

And, once again, we would like to stress that our daily work shows that we are consistently against of and that the injustice of the [SED] dictatorship is always clear."

SED is an abbreviation for the Socialist Unity Party of the former East German state.

A tweet from the Adenauer Foundation said, "too many walls and barricades worldwide! Berlin Wall #57 building of wall #1961." A picture of Israel's security barrier appears alongside the tweet.

The German journalist Alexander Nabert tweeted, "The Konrad Adenauer Foundation associates the alleged anti-fascist protection wall of the GDR [German Democratic Republic] with the real-existing anti-fascist protection wall of Israel. The difference, @KASonline, is: Israel defends itself against the annihilation wishes of thousands of antisemites."

Journalist Robin Alexander for The Welt tweeted it is "crass" the Adenauer Foundation compared Israel's separation wall with the Berlin Wall, and said the parallel is completely wrong.

Alexander Brakel, the head of the Adenauer Foundation in Jerusalem, wrote the Post by email. He said the Facebook post was not generated by the Adenauer office in Israel and said there "was no intention to compare Israel's security fence with the Berlin Wall." He apologized for the false impression the comparison made.

A Post email media query to the Adenauer Foundation in Berlin was not immediately returned.

According to the website of the Foreign Ministry, the number of Palestinian terror attacks in Israel dropped significantly after the separation barrier was completed.

"Statistical data indicates a 30% drop in the number of terrorist attacks that took place in 2003 compared to 2002. Similarly, there has been a 50% decrease in the number of victims murdered by terrorists in 2003 compared to the previous year,"

wrote the ministry.

The ministry noted, "There were 17 suicide bomber attacks inside Israel that emanated from the northern part (Samaria) of the West Bank during the months April-December 2002. In contrast, since construction began on the anti-terrorist fence, throughout all of 2003 only 5 suicide bomber attacks emanated from the same area."

Zuroff said Adenauer's comparison reminds him of why many Germans have learned the wrong the lessons from the Holocaust. "Instead of saying , 'no more unjust wars,' they say, 'no more wars.'"

He said it was the same message regarding walls. They can't differentiate from "walls that are legitimate and that save lives, and other walls that may be problematic," said Zuroff. The Israeli separation wall is not infringing on human rights, he said.

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