



# BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, 71-75 Shelton Street, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9JQ

Email: [office@brismes.org](mailto:office@brismes.org)

Website: [www.brismes.ac.uk](http://www.brismes.ac.uk)

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## **Statement in Solidarity with Dr Muriel Asseburg of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs**

We express our solidarity with Dr Muriel Asseburg who has come under attack by the Israeli embassy in Berlin following comments that she made in a podcast discussing the situation in the Middle East. We are concerned that, rather than interacting with Dr Asseburg's comments in good faith, the embassy has used its Twitter account to lambast Dr Asseburg, misrepresenting her comments and casting aspersions on her motivations.

This attack on Dr Asseburg for expressing her opinions on the situation in Israel-Palestine comes within a broader and worrying context of shrinking space in Germany for those who criticise the Israeli government and/or advocate for Palestinian rights. Over the past few years, a growing number of academics, researchers and journalists have faced harassment, investigation and even dismissal from their jobs merely for expressing criticisms of Israeli government policies and actions or in support of Palestinian rights, as documented by the [European Legal Support Centre](#). The IHRA working definition of antisemitism has frequently been used in these attacks.

Dr Asseburg, as a leading expert on Middle East affairs, has received the support of her employer and has been able to defend herself in an Israeli newspaper, Ha'aretz. Nonetheless, the Israeli embassy's attacks, which have been echoed by some German journalists, further amplify the chilling atmosphere for any individual or group in Germany that wishes to exercise their democratic rights of freedom of expression by criticising or questioning the actions of the Israeli government.

*BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom*  
*18 July 2023*