

Nov 6, 2025

**Speech by Prof. David Harel, President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, at the 'Falling Walls Impact Dialogue: 60 Years of Israeli-German Scientific Collaboration'.**

Over the last year, we have all heard numerous accounts describing the 60 years of wonderful friendship and collaboration between Israel and Germany, hailing the close and warm connections, and reaffirming the unwavering support we, Israel in general and Israeli science in particular, get from you, Germany in general, and German science in particular.

I too have spoken and written about this many times, both here in Berlin and in Israel, and as my many German friends here know, I repeatedly get emotional over this true, enduring friendship. Indeed, during the past week I was at events in Hiroshima, Budapest, and Berlin, all very different from each other. But here in Berlin, I feel like I've come home...

Without trying to belittle any of this, I feel it is now important to sound a careful word of caution, hopefully to be heard by our government too, back in Jerusalem. I do this here, on a panel devoted to the magnificent science relations between our two countries, because despite the great help from you, Israeli science is suffering from a major wave of international boycotting, which is a direct result of our government's actions, notably the war in Gaza.

By the way, your wonderful ambassador to Israel, Stephen Seibert, truly one of our greatest friends, agrees, stating said in a speech six weeks ago in a careful diplomatically phrased sentence: "But now cracks are beginning to form under our wonderful friendship".

To provide some perspective, I want to tell you about my trip to Hiroshima. It was to participate in the 63rd Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs, this one marking 80 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (BTW, the Pugwash organization received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995.)

The conference brought together participants from 40 countries – scientists, diplomats and policy experts, to discuss global peace and nuclear non-proliferation challenges. The meeting concluded with a summarizing document, which among other things emphasized that "nuclear weapons must never be used again, under any circumstances."

In a panel discussion on "The Role of Scientists in Reducing Nuclear Threats", I spoke about the moral responsibility of scientists in times of conflict. I mentioned the unspeakable Hamas massacre of October 7, of course, but also the terrible toll the subsequent war in Gaza has taken, and the urgent need to work toward a full peace settlement.

I ended my opening statement with this: **“Even without dropping an atomic bomb, you can kill almost 100,000 people and turn a city into ruins using conventional weapons. This cannot be allowed to happen ever again”.**

I then urged the Pugwash leadership to broaden its mandate and work tirelessly against all manners of arms race, and thus to help prevent future wars of any kind.

Interestingly, we are the focal point of some historical milestones regarding the quest for peace and equality:

- 80 years from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the end of WW2 and the holocaust.
- 60 years from the start of the Germany-Israel relationship.
- Last year was also 60 years from the revolutionary Civil Rights Act in the USA.
- And just two days ago, 30 years from the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, an act that has since seen to have delivered a devastating blow to the prospects of peace in the Middle East.

Since you, our Germany friends and supporters, want to help build and maintain the strength of German-Israeli science, and science in general, we need your help in achieving three things: peace, peace, and peace!!

**In fact, I have a dream: to participate in a new kind of Falling-Walls-like summit, not in 60 years, but, say in 10 or 20 (giving me more of a chance to take part in it too), but between Israel and all the nations in the region, including Iran and Palestine.**