

**Subject: Urgent appeal against anti-Semitism and hate speech at the upcoming events in Junkyard (Dortmund), Backstage (Munich) & Maaya (Berlin)**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Reggae music has always stood for peace, love and unity. Junkyard in Dortmund, Backstage in Munich and Maaya in Berlin are all clubs that offer space for people from different backgrounds to celebrate musical diversity and values such as tolerance and a peaceful coexistence.

Especially now, given the alarming rise in anti-Semitic and pro-terrorist incidents across Europe, including at music events, we feel compelled to raise an extremely worrying matter. In light of the **upcoming events on October 12h, 17th and 18th**, we urge you to reconsider the invitation to Keron Salmon, known as “Kabaka Pyramid”.

Over the past year, Kabaka Pyramid has repeatedly used his social media channels as well as other platforms to spread anti-Semitic and pro-terrorist content, especially after the heinous attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 and the resulting war against the terrorist organizations in Gaza (and later other terror militias), using his social media to spread lies, disinformation and anti-Semitic remarks about Jews and Israelis. While various other reggae artists expressed legitimate views and criticism on the issue, mainly highlighting the worrying humanitarian situation in Gaza, Kabaka Pyramid went as far as sharing posts containing blood libels and even showing support for internationally recognized terrorist organizations (e.g. Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad). Screenshots of some relevant posts from Kabaka Pyramid are attached to this letter and marked as **Appendix 1**. An expert opinion by RIAS NRW analyzing the anti-Semitic and terrorist-supporting aspects of the above-mentioned posts and another artist is attached to this letter and marked as **Appendix 2**.

It is important to emphasize that the problem with the above hateful statements is not just political. These acts have a direct impact on the rise of hate speech and violent acts against Jews and people of Israeli descent in these tense times. This rise is no coincidence, and it is happening precisely because of the hateful statements of influencers like Kabaka Pyramid and others. Spreading lies and hatred towards any particular group, be it based on religion, origin, gender or sexual identity, has no place in the 21st century. This should also apply to Jews and Israelis, many of whom attend these events every year and will not feel welcome or safe in the presence of artists who promote hatred against them.

The fact that there is a war going on in no way justifies such statements, which spread racist hatred and border on sedition. Although there have been attempts to correct other hateful statements in the past - the most famous example being the removal of a homophobic song from the repertoire of Mark Anthony Myrie (known as “Buju Banton”) that he released in the early 1990s - we believe that the damage caused by Kabaka Pyramid's posts cannot be repaired by a public apology in the current circumstances, as hundreds of thousands of his followers have recently seen and learned his current views. The only way to address his actions is to hold Kabaka Pyramid accountable.

We, therefore, appeal to you to reconsider Kabaka Pyramid's participation in the events on October 12, 17 and 18. Your actions would be a clear sign that you stand for inclusivity and respect - values that are of central importance both in German society and in the reggae community. The Junkyard Club, the

Backstage Club and the Maaya Club should be safe spaces for musical diversity for all, free from any form of hate or discrimination.

It should be noted that Israeli and Jewish music professionals and fans have recently experienced several appalling incidents of hatred at European music events and festivals and must therefore increasingly ask themselves whether they can attend these events with their own safety in mind. This underlines all the more the importance of taking **a clear stand and a firm stance** against those who spread anti-Semitic and racist rhetoric. Half-hearted approaches to these issues will not suffice.

It should also be noted that providing a platform for artists who make anti-Semitic, pro-terrorist and hateful statements also has legal consequences. In Germany, strict legislation against incitement to hatred and the dissemination of anti-Semitic statements (**§ 130 of the German Criminal Code - StGB**) makes one liable to prosecution, and severe penalties await those who publicly disseminate such views, incite hatred and trivialize violence.

While we recognize that adherence to moral and ethical principles can have consequences, including private and public ostracism, verbal and physical abuse, and financial or contractual inconvenience, we expect you to actively address this issue and take the recommended decisive action.

Take a stand against this and any form of hate speech and discrimination at your events.

We would like to clarify that this letter does not exhaust our claims and that we reserve the right to exercise our rights under German law in parallel to our settlement efforts, if necessary.

This letter is being written on behalf of several groups that take a stand against all forms of anti-Semitism and hate speech. One of these groups is the Concerned Reggae Collective, which wishes to remain anonymous in order to protect its members from possible threats. We hope you will understand this decision.

If you have any further questions or require clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

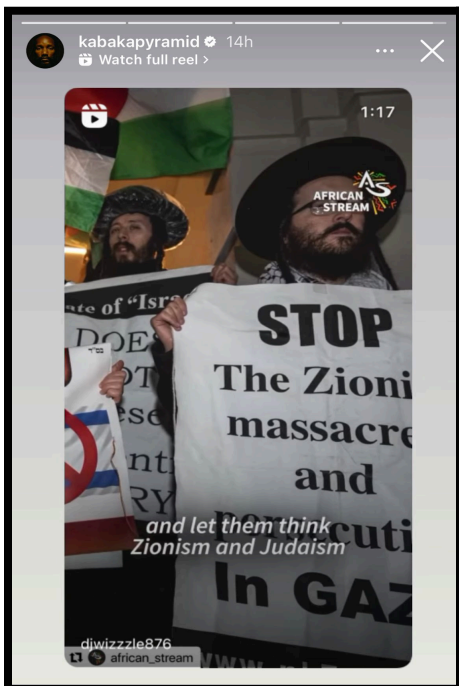
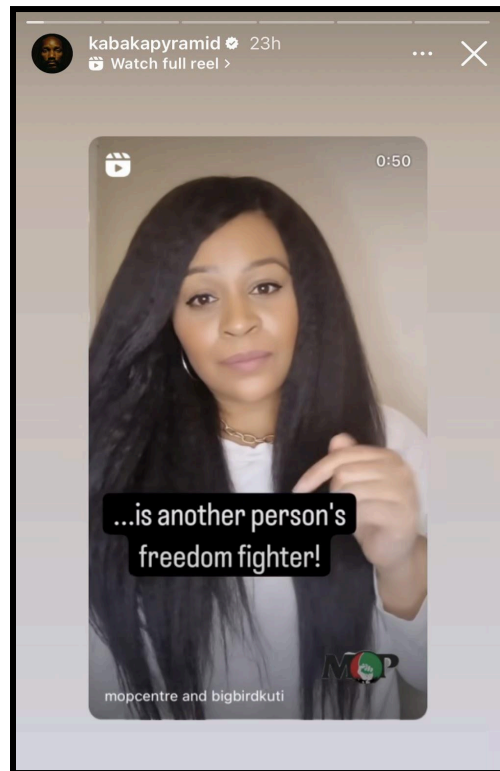
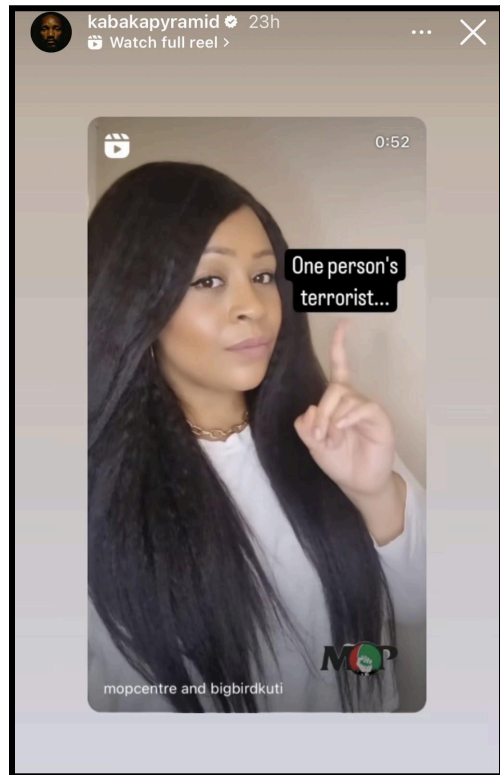
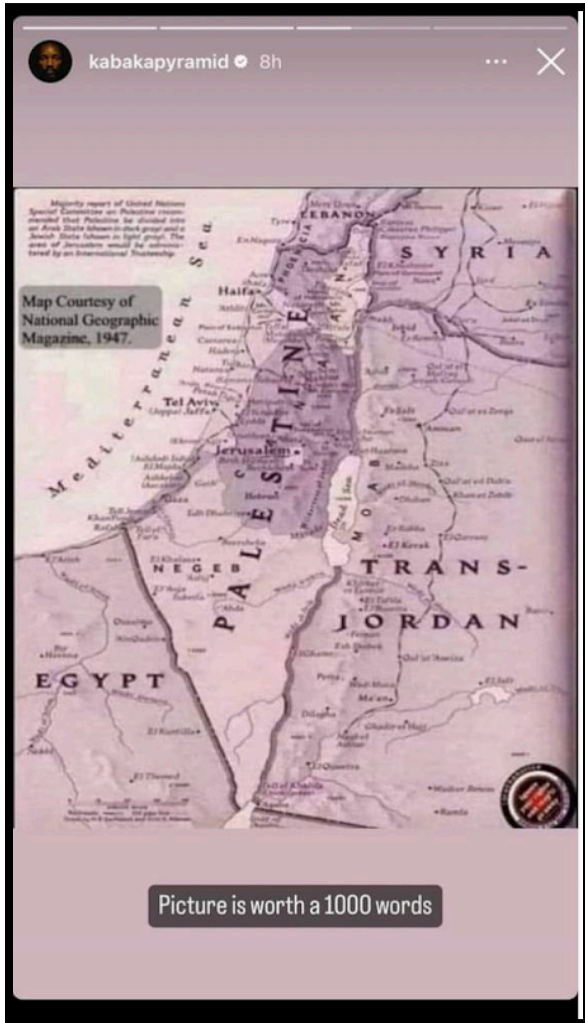
Sincerely,

**Concerned Reggae Collective & Artists Against Antisemitism**

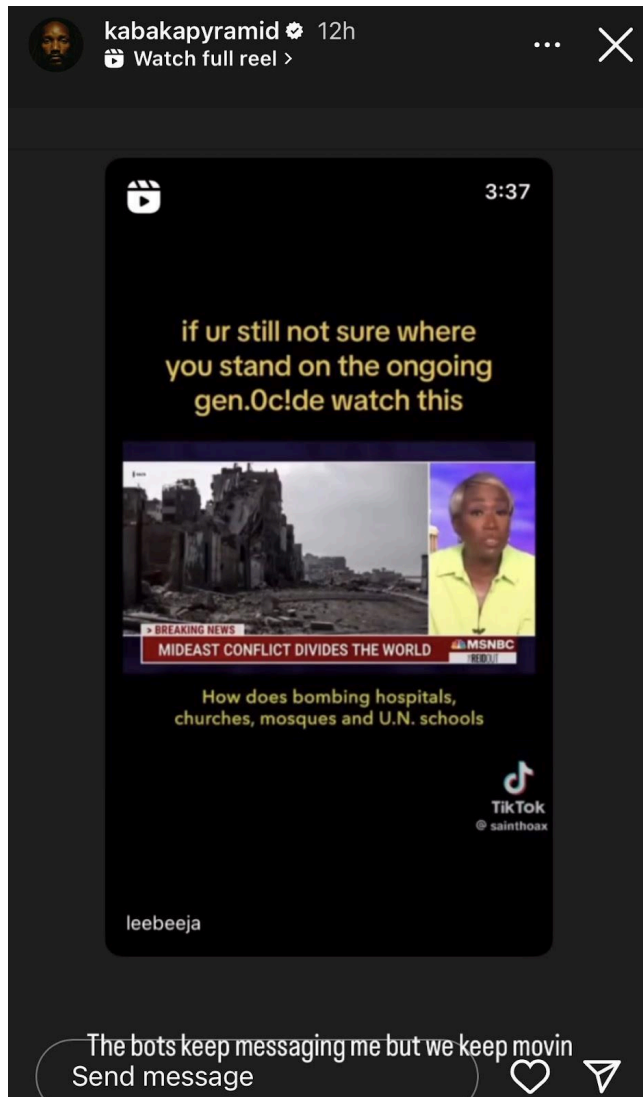
**CC (in relation to Maaya, Berlin):**

The Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, Claudia Roth  
The Commissioner for Anti-Semitism of the State of Berlin, Prof. Dr. Samuel Salzborn  
Gema

Appendix 1 (Part 1)



## Appendix 1 (Part 2)



## Appendix 2

### 2024-01-25 Statement RIAS NRW

RIAS NRW is a state-wide reporting office for anti-Semitic incidents in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. RIAS NRW documents anti-Semitic incidents of both a criminal and non-criminal nature and evaluates them according to standardized nationwide criteria. RIAS NRW supports those affected by anti-Semitism in the federal state and provides information on the various forms of expression and manifestations of anti-Semitism. We regularly make our expertise in the field of anti-Semitism available when, for example, the question arises as to what extent a statement should be considered anti-Semitic or not. We would like to comply with such a request in this case.

RIAS NRW has received statements from the Jamaican musician "Kabaka Pyramide" in which, in our opinion, clearly anti-Semitic attributions are used. The statements were made on the social network Instagram both in the form of public posts and in the context of private correspondence via direct message.

- On October 17, Kabaka Pyramid published a map of the Middle East from 1947 in an Instagram story, one year before the founding of the modern state of Israel, on which the territory of the then British Mandate is indicated as "Palestine". The artist wrote **"Picture is worth a 1000 words"**. Irrespective of the actual historical facts, the artist's post obviously wishes for a Palestinian state on the *entire* territory of Israel (which would only be compatible with the dissolution of the only Jewish state in the world). According to the IHRA working definition of antisemitism used by the German government, denying Israel's right to exist constitutes a case of Israel-related antisemitism.<sup>1</sup>

- After an Israeli Instagram user expressed irritation at the above post via direct message, the artist responded with anti-Semitic conspiracy myths: **"How much of the world's wealth do the leaders of your people own or control? How many governments? How many media outlets?"**. Here the artist spreads the classic anti-Semitic idea of worldwide Jewish control in business, politics and the media. Other statements by the artist regarding an **"elite"** that sacrifices Palestinians and Israelis for **"war profits and sick power rituals in order to gain control over the world, or at least the Western world"** can at least be seen as structurally compatible with anti-Semitism. The fact that the artist has internalized conspiracy myths overall is also shown by the comparison that it was **"just as American citizens were sacrificed for September 11"**.

- In a further correspondence with an Israeli via Instagram messenger, the artist once again openly formulates the anti-Semitic narratives he has internalized: **"You have America's support because rich Jews own America"**. The anti-Semitic stereotype of "rich Jews" who own America presented here is based on the traditional conspiracy myth that Jews have omnipotent power and influence and can therefore influence and control the fate of the world. This conspiracy myth also appears in other parts of the artist's work.

- Even if the artist expresses such open anti-Semitic incitement in the context of private correspondence (especially with Jewish-Israeli users) on Instagram, the above-mentioned anti-Semitic attitudes of the artist also come through in his public Instagram posts: In another anti-Semitic post from November 1, 2023, for example, he writes that **"we all know who controls the media and the governments of the Western world"**.

- He also published further posts and stories that can be classified as decidedly anti-Israel and reveal double standards in the assessment of the events: Here, Israel is accused of "genocide", while Hamas' massacres of the Israeli civilian population on October 7 are not problematized at any point. On the

contrary, on December 1, Kabaka Pyramide shared a story in which Hamas terrorists are even declared **"freedom fighters"**, which in view of the mass executions, rapes and abductions of Israeli civilians by Hamas is pure mockery (**"One person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter!"**). October 7 marks a turning point for Jews worldwide, as not since the end of the Shoah have so many Jews been murdered in a single day.

With almost 230,000 followers, the artist's Instagram channel has a wide reach, through which the antisemitic statements outlined above reach a broad audience.

Another reggae artist by the name of "Sevana" also participates on Instagram with decidedly anti-Israel postings that can be classified as Israel-related antisemitism (**"against the Palestinian genocide and the settler-colonialist occupation of the state of Israel"**). She responded publicly to a critical comment with the statement **"The Jewish Holocaust is exactly the reason why you shouldn't support the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. But fine, as long as it doesn't affect you and you can keep working on your jewels and keep drinking water"**. This is an open reference to the anti-Semitic stereotype of Jews as "rich jewel merchants", which is diametrically opposed to the depiction of "poor Palestinians". The demonizing attributions of "ethnic cleansing" and "settler colonialism" continue to serve Israel-related anti-Semitic narratives.

In conclusion, it can be summarized that both Kabaka Pyramid and Sevana clearly show that supposedly harmless motifs of "criticism of Israel" occur in combination with openly anti-Semitic ideas. In both cases, it is more than regrettable that artists, who have repeatedly spoken out against racism and discrimination in the past, appear to be blind to anti-Semitism and instead actively spread anti-Semitism themselves.

RIAS NRW bases its assessment of anti-Semitism on the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism adopted internationally and by the German government. All the statements quoted above can be substantiated on the basis of sources available to RIAS NRW.

1 Cf. <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/arbeitsdefinition-antisemitismus>