



Agudath
Israel
of America
אגודת ישראל באמריקה

May 9, 2022

Mr. Carsten Spohr
Chief Executive Officer
Lufthansa Airlines
625 RXR Plaza
Uniondale, NY 11553

Dear Mr. Spohr:

We are in receipt of very disturbing accounts of what allegedly transpired on May 4 at the Frankfurt airport when passengers who were visibly Jewish were prevented by Lufthansa personnel from continuing their trip.

Apparently, on Lufthansa flight 401, which flew to Frankfurt from JFK airport in New York, several people who happened to be Jewish, did not comply with a request to honor the airline's mask mandate. We make no excuse for such behavior. But other Jewish people who were onboard that flight and who claimed to have been fully masked throughout were subsequently prevented from boarding a connecting flight to Budapest. It is reported that two dozen heavily armed police officers were positioned to enforce that decision.

Passengers who were not visibly Jewish were not prevented from boarding their next flights.

Testimony that our organization heard directly, as well as video recordings of interactions between irate passengers and Lufthansa personnel, seem to support the accusation that people were being punished simply because they shared ethnicity and religion with the alleged rule violators.

We make no excuses, either, for any inappropriate reactions of some who were prevented from boarding their flights. They were understandably upset but needed to act civilly all the same.

What remains deeply disconcerting, though, is the very fact of what is being claimed by the hampered passengers and is supported by the video evidence.

For innocent passengers to be penalized for the alleged actions of others who share their ethnicity or religion is simply unacceptable, indeed abhorrent, here, no less than were the mistreated passengers African, Asian or Scandinavian.

Judaism teaches that there are two sides to every story, and both must be heard before any conclusion is rendered.

And so, we ask you to please research the incident yourself and be in touch with me as soon as possible to schedule a meeting to clarify what happened and why.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rabbi David Zwiebel

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