

# Europe Monitoring

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## Germany

### Mevlûde Genç died

Mevlûde Genç and her husband Durmuş Genç lost two daughters, two grandchildren and a niece in May 1993 after right-wing extremists threw incendiary devices into their house in Solingen. 17 family members were seriously injured. Shortly after the assassination, she called for reconciliation.

For Germany, the attack in Solingen was the culmination of a wave of racist acts of violence that swept across the country at the time. For Mevlûde Genç, it destroyed what was dear to her in life. "After 1993, my world collapsed," she said 20 years later: "I lost five of my children in one day



*Mevlûde Genç with Angela Merkel; Photo: dpa*

and put them in coffins the same day." She spoke of the pain that would not let her go: "I can no longer bear it."

Like few others, Mevlûde Genç embodied the be-

lief in the good in people," said North Rhine-Westphalia's Prime Minister Hendrik Wüst after her death, according to the Düsseldorf State Chancellery. "We will painfully miss Mevlûde Genç and her work. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family," said the CDU politician. Mevlûde Genç would have turned 80 next February.

In 2018, the NRW state government donated a Mevlûde-Genç medal in her honor for special services to tolerance, reconciliation between cultures and the peaceful coexistence of religions. "Mevlûde Genç has always put peace and reconciliation first. She knew how to transform the immeasurable pain inflicted on her into strength to stand up for other people. She has the hatred, violence and resentment who hit her back as generosity and tolerance," said Wüst.

Federal Minister of Agriculture Cem Özdemir (Greens) said: "After the racist attack in Solingen, she refused to hate the murderers. Racists live from hatred - that's exactly what she never gave them. She will always remain my great role model."

The NRW Integration Minister Josefine Paul (Greens) also commemorated Genç in a statement from her ministry after her death: "All her life, Mevlûde Genç called for tolerance and peaceful coexistence between cultures. For that, I thank her and that of our entire society. My thoughts are with the family and friends of this amazing and strong woman."

## Islamic center: Vice President forestalls deportation

For a long time, there was speculation about the expulsion or departure of Seyed Soleiman M., the deputy head of the Islamic Center Hamburg (IZH), - now the Hamburg interior authorities have provided clarity. It announced that the Iranian had left the country for his homeland. In doing so, he forestalled his deportation. M. had previously repeatedly defended himself legally against an expulsion, most recently the Hamburg Higher Administrative Court rejected an appeal against



Photo: Bertold Fabricius

the expulsion order in mid-October. The allegations against M. are also supported by findings from the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution. They are intended to prove that the person concerned maintained connections to two fundraising associations working for «Hizb Allah», which have since been banned by the Federal Ministry of the Interior because of terrorist financing. This would prove, for example, corresponding visits to clubs close to «Hizb Allah». In addition, the person concerned maintained close contact with representatives of «Hizb Allah» in Lebanon. The «Hizb Allah» (translated: «Party of God») is responsible for a large number of attacks and openly questions Israel's right to exist or calls for its violent elimination. Since April 2020, there has therefore been a ban on activities in Germany.

The IZH is part of the Islamic State Treaty with the City of Hamburg via the Schura state association. This contract is up for renewal, but in the past few weeks it has become clear that the Hamburg governing parties are making this dependent on the IZH leaving.

## Minister of the Interior in Qatar

German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser met the head of government in Qatar to talk about human rights shortly before the World Cup. Faeser and German Football Association's (DFB) President Bernd Neuendorf had previously informed themselves about the final preparations for the World Cup. The SPD Minister responsible for sport spoke to the Secretary General of the World Cup Organizing Committee, Hassan al-Thawadi, in the Qatari capital of Doha.

Faeser's two-day trip focused on human rights issues that were discussed around the tournament, such as the protection of queer people from discrimination and the responsibility for migrant workers who built the World Cup stadiums. Before the start of Faeser's visit, the Qatari government had complained because the German minister had publicly criticized the World Cup award to Qatar on German television. Actually, the human rights officer Luise Amtsberg should also be part of the delegation, but she cancelled her participation at short notice. The latest developments have made it clear how difficult it is in the run-up to the World Cup with the Qatari government «to hold the open and critical talks I have planned about the human rights situation in Qatar,» explained Amtsberg. So she decided to do the trip at a later date.



Luise Amtsberg; Photo: Bündnis 90/Die Grünen

With the «recent developments» she probably means, among other things, the unusual reaction of the emirate to Faeser's statements in the run-up to her trip. After the interior minister criticized the award of the World Cup to Qatar on October 27, the Gulf state summoned the German ambassador the following day and handed him a note of

protest.

Shortly before Faeser's criticism of Qatar, a report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) caused a stir. Four trans women, a bisexual woman and a homosexual have told the human rights organization how Qatari police allegedly took them to a torture chamber in al-Dafneh, one of the high-rise areas of the capital Doha.

When asked whether Faeser would address the HRW report to al-Thani, the German Ministry of the Interior dodged when asked and referred to an in-house press release from October 28 about Faeser's trip to Qatar, in which, among other things, the «protection of queer people» was raised.

The mistreatment described in the HRW report, al-Thani's political responsibility for the attacks - all of this is missing from the press release.

Al-Thani only appears as Faeser's «counterpart», with whom she will exchange views on the «reforms and their continuation after the end of the tournament». Which reforms are meant exactly is not specified in the press release.

## Austria

### Austrian technique for Iranian drones

In Austria, people proudly emphasize neutrality again and again - and yet motors from an Austrian company being built in Iranian combat drones, which Russia uses in the war against Ukraine. Shahed-136 is the type designation of the Iranian-designed kamikaze drones that Russia is using intensively attacking civilian targets in Ukraine. Russia is said to have bought hundreds of these drones from Iran.

The technology built into it is not exclusively Iranian. Engines from Rotax, based in Upper Austria, power the Shahed-136. This became known a few days ago when the Ukrainian army reassembled a downed drone and was able to identify the manufacturer of the engine.

This is tricky for the Austrian government. Not only do international sanctions prohibit the export of military goods or ones that can be used for military purposes to Iran. Austria is a neutral country and is adamant about this status, even in the current world situation. Vienna has only reluctantly supported the EU sanctions against Russia, and it does not supply arms to Ukraine.

It is all the more astonishing that a war party is

now being supported with Austrian material. And not for the first time: Already in 2021 it turned out that engines from the company Rotax were used in combat drones. At that time it was a Turkish Bayraktar drone that Azerbaijan used in the war against Armenia. This resulted in a parliamentary question from the liberal party NEOS.



*Part of a Shahed drone in Ukraine Photo: WSJ*

Austria has adopted the EU Code of Conduct for Arms Exports, which stipulates certain standards for the export of war equipment. Added to this is national legislation, which prohibits exports to warring nations.

Arms exports are checked by the Ministry of the Interior, the export of goods that can be used for both civilian and military purposes - so-called dual-use goods - are controlled by the Ministry of Economic Affairs. When asked by the press, it was said there that the engines were not subject to the dual-use regulation, so the export was not subject to approval. In addition, the export was carried out via a sales partner based in Italy. An export license is therefore in the responsibility of the Italian authorities.

## Israel

### Right-wing parties win parliamentary elections

The right-wing conservative opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu has won the parliamentary elections in Israel after all the votes have been counted. His right-wing religious camp was able to secure a majority of 64 of the 120 seats in parliament (Knesset). His Likud party became the strongest force with 32 seats in parliament. They are followed by the Future Party of liberal Prime Minister Jair Lapid with 24 seats.

Lapid congratulated his political opponent on the

election victory in the evening. The State of Israel is above all political considerations, he wrote on Twitter after a phone call with Netanyahu. He wished him «happiness for the good of the Israe-

li people and the State of Israel». He instructed all departments of the prime minister's office to prepare for an orderly transfer of power. For the first time in Israel's history, a right-wing alliance made it in third place. The Religious Zionist Party of Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir is considered the kingmaker for Netanyahu and won 14 seats. The left-liberal Meretz party and the Arab Balad party fell just short of the 3.25 percent hurdle.

The people of Israel had voted on the composition of the Knesset for the fifth time in just three and a half years. Voter turnout was still comparatively high at 71.3 percent. The current eight-party coalition collapsed in June after losing its majority after just 12 months governing.



*Right-wing extremist Itamar Ben-Gvir Photo: Jonatan Sindel*

