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Germany

Sanctions against Hamas and Samidoun

“The German government must not accept that networks can operate in this country that support such barbaric acts of terrorism as we are currently experiencing in Israel, from rocket attacks to armed attacks, hostage-taking, humiliation and desecration of corpses,” said a politician. “The Federal Minister of the Interior must act now and consider measures under association law, including bans.”



Photo: IMAGO

Now the government has reacted. Federal Interior Minister Nancy Faeser (SPD) has banned the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood organization Hamas and the pro-Palestinian network Samidoun. Hamas flags and other license plates are already banned in Germany. The German security authorities have been keeping an eye on the supporters of the Palestinian terrorist organization PFLP in Germany for a long time because of their con-

tacts and their anti-Israel and anti-Semitic propaganda. The network of radical Palestinians also includes the “Palestinian Community in Germany,” which, according to the security authorities, is primarily made up of Hamas supporters. In the case of Hamas and the foreign structures of Samidoun, it is a so-called ban on activity, and for the German structures of Samidoun it is also a ban on associations. The consequences are similar. Any assets will be confiscated and internet presence and social media activities will be banned. Anyone who continues to be active for the organizations is committing a criminal offense.

Hamas is classified as a terrorist organization by the EU and the US. According to estimates by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Germany, there are around 450 people behind it, many of whom are German citizens.

Samidoun is a group that describes itself as the “Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network.” According to constitutional protection officers, Samidoun belongs to the radical Palestinian organization PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) and is hostile to Israel. The PFLP itself propagates the armed struggle against Israel, but, unlike Hamas, is not religious. Samidoun caused outrage just a few hours after the bloodbath in Israel on October 7th because members of the network distributed sweets in honor of Hamas on Sonnenallee in the Neukölln district of Berlin. Shortly after Hamas’s terrorist attack on Israel at the beginning of October, Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced a ban on the two organizations’ activ-

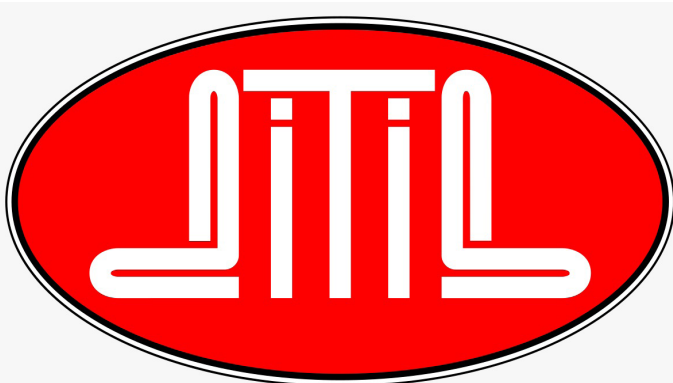
ities. Such an announcement in advance of a ban is very unusual.

Parts of the German government are questioning cooperation with the Turkish religious authorities

The FDP and Green parties represented in the coalition are questioning the state's cooperation with the Islamic association Ditib against the backdrop of the Middle East war. Since the largest Islamic association in Germany has once again failed to position itself clearly and unambiguously with regard to Hamas' terrorist attack on Israel, "there simply cannot be 'business as usual' in the cooperation," said the Green Party's domestic policy spokeswoman. "There should be no reservations or considerations," she explained, "especially not from Muslim organizations, which, conversely, repeatedly clearly demand solidarity and support from others in the fight against Islamophobia."

The religious policy spokeswoman for the FDP made a similar statement: "We expect Ditib to position and communicate clearly and unambiguously both internally and externally, and that any anti-Semitic tendencies or statements that question Israel's right to exist will not be tolerated." Ditib has so far neither distanced itself from the anti-Israeli rhetoric of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan nor from anti-Semitic statements by the president of the Turkish religious authority, it is criticized.

The FDP politician added that the Islamic association has an influence on Islamic teaching in many federal states. The states should review these agreements: "Anyone who does not clearly name terror cannot be a contact person in German education policy."



Sweden

Fake propaganda online influences Muslims

Sweden has had a disastrous position in the Muslim world for some time now. The mass demonstrations from Morocco to Pakistan, the Swedish embassy in Baghdad being set on fire, the calls from various Islamist groups to kill Swedish citizens - all of this was also reflected in the international media always and rightly associated with the Quran burnings that Iraqi asylum seeker Salwan Momika regularly organizes in Stockholm, supposedly in the name of freedom of expression.

But what is neglected is that the so-called LVU campaign, named after the Swedish law that regulates the care and support of children and young people under the age of 18, is just as influential and harmful as the book burnings. In the fall of 2021, the first videos appeared on Arabic-language websites claiming that Swedish social services were taking children away from Muslim families with the aim of forcibly assimilating them. Sometimes the videos claim that the children are being kidnapped and forcibly baptized, sometimes it is said that childless couples can serve themselves in a kind of adoption super-market or even that the children are being forced into prostitution.

In some cases, couples actually became the targets of digital smear campaigns. Dagens Nyheter recently published a report about a homosexual couple who adopted a girl named Miriam six years ago. An Egyptian blogger claimed in November 2022 that the girl was Muslim (which is not true), after all Miriam is a Muslim name. The girl was kidnapped against her will by the "two perverts" (which is also not true; the girl's grandmother speaks in the report, praising the two adoptive fathers highly). The Qatari news channel Al-Jazeera picked up the story, apparently unchecked. For the couple it then became a nightmare of homophobic insults, character assassination and threatening emails.

In an attempt to end the digital counter-intelligence spree, the Swedish government brought in the Psychological Defense Agency (MPF), a small agency created specifically to counter concerted fake news operations.

In Sweden, the campaign has led to such an aggressive distrust of authorities that many social

workers no longer feel safe. In Gothenburg, three social workers were assigned just to counteract all the lies and rumors.

How powerful the campaign is to this day can also be seen from the fact that chants against the Swedish social services have been chanted several times at pro-Palestinian demonstrations in recent weeks. One speaker, addressing the Prime Minister, shouted: "Ulf Kristersson, do not accuse the Palestinians of kidnapping 20 Israeli children while thousands of children are being kidnapped by your agency called Social Services!" And the Tunisian Islamist who shot two Swedish soccer fans in Brussels in mid-October said he acted out of revenge, "for the good of all Muslims." Ulf Kristersson felt compelled to give his own press conference, at which he warned that the LVU campaign was extremely dangerous. "The whole thing is a lie, Swedish social services don't kidnap children."

France

David Star becomes "Judah Star" again

Unidentified people spray-painted several buildings in Paris with Stars of David, further increasing fears of anti-Semitic attacks against the backdrop of the war in the Middle East. Several facades in the 14th district of the French capital were daubed with the same blue Stars of David, the symbol of Israel and Judaism, as residents reported.



Photo: Reuters

The public prosecutor's office began an investigation into property damage for racist or anti-Semitic reasons, a crime that can be punished with up to four years in prison. Similar graffiti had already appeared in several suburbs of Paris over the weekend. Some of the graffiti there also contained slogans such as "From the sea to the

Jordan, Palestine will win."

The graffiti was reminiscent of the Nazis' Judah stars, which ultimately "led to the destruction of millions of Jews," said the mayor of the 14th district, Carine Petit, on the online service X. The aim of the graffiti was clearly to "spread fear," said the graffiti Chairman of the Jewish Student Union, Samuel Lejoyeux, told the AFP news agency. Since the beginning of the war, which began on October 7th with a major attack on Israel by the Islamist Hamas, the number of anti-Semitic or radical Islamic incidents has increased significantly. Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne reported in parliament about more than 850 anti-Semitic "incidents and almost 6,000 reports on the Internet". Since then there have been more than 430 arrests and more than 230 investigations are still ongoing, Borne said. Your government condemns these "shameful acts" "in the strongest possible terms" and will punish each individual act. According to Transport Minister Clément Beaune, 100 bomb threats against airports have been counted since October 18th. "We will file a complaint every time, we won't let anything get away with it," Beaune told broadcaster LCI. Presumably because of this "determined" stance, the number of threats has decreased somewhat in recent days.

In France, the highest of three terror alert levels has been in effect since an Islamist-motivated attack on a teacher in Arras in mid-October, and security precautions have been massively expanded.

Türkiye

Erdoğan's „Yes“ to Sweden's NATO accession

This is “the first of three steps,” said Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billström after news broke in Stockholm that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had signed his country's NATO application and submitted it to the Turkish parliament for ratification.

“Happy news,” Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson had written on X an hour earlier.

The Turkish president can now demand F-16 jet fighters from the US in exchange for his signature. The US government approved the sale, but Congress did not, some MPs were against it. Now people in Sweden are wondering what might have been the deciding factor for Erdoğan's sudden signature. After all, the Swedes' image has been even worse since the recent Koran burnings than it was a year ago. And although the Turkish president promised to sign at the NATO summit in July, he recently took more time than promised.

It is unlikely that parliament will not follow Erdoğan and thus snub him. The third and final step for Sweden would then be approval from Hungary: Viktor Orbán had refused to sign because Sweden had repeatedly criticized Hungary for the dismantling of democracy, restricted freedom of the press and its handling of EU funds. On the other hand, he had emphasized several times that they would not be the last country to sign.



Recep Tayyip Erdoğan/ Photo: AFP