

Germany Briefing: October 2024

Reporting period: 1st October - 31st October 2024

Increasing Islamophobia in Politics and Society

At least two thirds of Muslims in Germany directly affected by discrimination

A recent study by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) shows that 57% of Muslims in Germany have already experienced [discrimination](#). This puts Germany significantly above the average of 41% for the 13 European countries studied.

As the surveys for the study were conducted before 7 October 2023, with a significant increase in Islamophobic incidents since then, the current figures are likely to be even higher. In 2016, the number of Muslims affected by discrimination was 39%.

Intensification of political discourse are driving Muslims in Germany to consider emigration.

The strengthening of the right-wing populist and nationalist Alternative for Germany (AfD) with its proximity to the violent right-wing scene is leading to an increasing intensification of public discourse, including a partial normalisation of Islamophobic and xenophobic positions. This normalisation is also being promoted by politicians from other parties and political orientations adopting the AfD's topics, arguments and framing of issues such as migration and Islam for fear of losing votes to the AfD.

Regular surveys on current voter sentiment, which are considered representative, predict that the AfD will double its 2021 election result one year before the next federal elections, which would give it almost 20% of the vote. According to a study by the German Centre for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM), every fourth person from the MENA region living in Germany is seriously considering emigrating as a result of this [development](#).

Gaza and Palestine

From river to sea becomes a vehicle for law enforcement

The German authorities are continuing to take massive action against pro-Palestinian activists. For example, a fan of the Celtic Glasgow football club was expelled from the Dortmund stadium for carrying a Palestinian flag and a pro-Palestinian protest camp was banned because of the announced visit by Greta Thunberg.

The declaration of the slogan 'From the river to the sea' with or without the addition 'Palestine will be free' as a slogan of Hamas, which is banned as a terrorist organisation in Germany, by the German Ministry of the Interior serves the authorities as a vehicle to justify numerous house searches of pro-Palestinian activists and bans on demonstrations, among other things. In addition, liking, sharing or disseminating this statement via social media, as well as announcing it

publicly, can lead to the refusal of naturalisation or even expulsion from Germany, as the immigration authorities may consider it to be anti-Semiticly motivated and glorifying terrorism.

Also affected is the Islamic Centre Fürstenwalde al-Salam (IZF), which has been classified as 'assured extremist' by the Brandenburg Office for the Protection of the Constitution since 2023 and has now been banned by order of Brandenburg's Interior Minister Michael Stübgen. The background to this is said to be links to Islamist extremist organisations. The association is also accused of disseminating content from organisations close to the Muslim Brotherhood on its social media channels, as well as content that questions Israel's right to exist. The association thus violates the free and democratic basic order. As early as 2023, the association denied the accusations of the Minister of the Interior, according to whom 'they clearly belong to Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood'.

German government justifies murder of civilians

Meanwhile, the German government is reaffirming its unconditional support for Israel. After months without arms exports to Israel, the government has authorised exports worth over 94 million euros in the past two months.

[German Foreign](#) Minister Annalena Baerbock defended Israel's recent attacks on hospitals and refugee camps, calling them necessary:

"We have also made it just as clear – and this isn't a contradiction, but rather something that adds to my last point – that international humanitarian law and Israel's right to exist are inextricably linked. That's what Germany's *raison d'état* stands for. That's why we have made it clear time and again that self-defence means, of course, not only attacking terrorists, but also destroying them. This is why I have made it so clear that when Hamas terrorists hide behind people, behind schools, then we end up in very difficult waters. But we're not shying away from this. This is why I made it clear at the United Nations that civilian sites could lose their protected status if terrorists abuse this status. That's what Germany stands for – and that's what we mean when we refer to Israel's security. "Never again!" means standing up for Israel's security, for protecting Jewish life in Germany. "Never again!" means doing the right thing every day and not what is convenient".

Government and opposition agree on resolution targeting voices critical of Israel

After almost a year, the parliamentary groups of the governing coalition and the opposition parties CDU/CSU have agreed on a resolution to protect Jewish life in Germany entitled 'Never again is now: Protecting, preserving and strengthening Jewish life in Germany'.

The resolution is a reaction to the increasing 'hatred of Jews and Israel-related anti-Semitism' since 7 October 2023, a development that is 'due both to increasingly open and violent anti-Semitism in right-wing extremist and Islamist milieus and to a relativising approach and increasing Israel-related and left-wing anti-imperialist anti-Semitism'. The resolution reaffirms the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism, which has been categorised as problematic by many, as it allows criticism of the state of Israel to be

considered anti-Semitic, among other things. This definition has been used by the German government and parliament since 2017.

The resolution then proposes numerous measures to combat anti-Semitism, which would, however, also further strengthen the systematic suppression of pro-Palestinian voices in Germany, including:

- Projects and organisations that spread anti-Semitism, question Israel's right to exist, call for a boycott of Israel or actively support the BDS movement should no longer be allowed to receive financial support from the state.
- Bans on the operation and organisation of 'extremist' organisations such as BDS in Germany should be examined
- Legal loopholes in asylum, residence and citizenship law as well as in education law should be closed in order to improve the possibilities for sanctions in the event of anti-Semitic incidents. In view of the past few months and current developments, it can be assumed that voices critical of Israel in particular are to be suppressed in the process

The text concludes by stating that Israel has the right under international law to defend itself against attacks that violate international law and therefore has a recognised duty to protect its citizens from terror while respecting its obligations under international law.