

Switzerland Briefing: September & October 2024

Reporting period: 1st September - 31st October 2024

Swiss media houses with a clear pro-Israeli line and close ties to the Zionist lobby

Anonymous statements by eight journalists from the major Swiss media houses Ringier, Tamedia, NZZ and CH Media shed light on the causes of strongly pro-Israeli reporting in Switzerland:

- Journalists avoid criticising the often one-sided and clearly pro-Israeli reporting for fear of losing their jobs.
- Tamedia instructed its journalists to include in every report on the Gaza war that Hamas started the war on 7 October 2023. This was to be done using terms such as 'terrible' or 'worst massacre'.
- Jewish victims of the war are portrayed in particular, as they attract a large readership. People from the Arab world, on the other hand, are generally dehumanised with violence against them being normalised.
- While Palestinian sources are generally not given much credence or the information is trivialized, the Swiss media largely adopt typical arguments from Israeli representatives. The pro-Israeli line is essentially predetermined by the editors. According to several sources, Eric Gujer, editor-in-chief of the leading Swiss media outlet NZZ, personally overlooks the dissemination of the articles on the topic of Israel and Palestine, regularly demanding adjustments.
- Several editorial offices are very close to pro-Israeli lobbyists and the Zionist platform Fokus Israel, which was founded in 2024, due to personal entanglements. Even extreme pro-Israeli positions are published uncritically.

Security Policy Committee initiates ban on Hezbollah

Following the Federal Council's decision to ban Hamas, the Security Policy Committee of the Council of States is now also calling for a ban on Hezbollah. While the ban on Hamas was based on the Federal Act on the Prohibition of the Islamic State and al-Qaeda, the ban on Hezbollah is to be enshrined in the Swiss Criminal Code. While a ban on Hezbollah was still rejected in autumn 2022, this is now appropriate due to the change in circumstances.

Authorities view increase in Islamophobic incidents with indifference

The Federation of Islamic Umbrella Organisations in Switzerland has recorded a threefold increase in Islamophobic incidents since October 2023 and a fourfold increase since 2022. At the same time, the authorities are still not keeping any official statistics or taking any measures to counteract this.