

## Germany briefing: January - February 2024

*Reporting period: 1st January – 29th February 2024*

### Exposé on far-right AfD's mass deportation plans triggers protests, as well as renewed support

- During a clandestine meeting of thought leaders within the far-right scene, and influential members and officials of the right-nationalist and Islamophobic Alternative for Germany (AfD) in Potsdam, [detailed discussions took place](#) regarding the mass expulsion of individuals with a migration background, irrespective of their nationality.
- Despite widespread protests against right-wing extremism and xenophobia across Germany following the reporting on the meeting by the Correctiv platform, the coverage did not significantly harm the popularity of the AfD.

According to recent surveys the party, poised to become the second-largest in the country with almost 20% support in upcoming elections, experienced an increase in membership applications, as reported by the Radio Berlin Brandenburg (rbb) since its publication on January 10, 2024.

Simultaneously, the fears of individuals with a migration background directly affected by the AfD's plans are often marginalised in the debate on the far-right in Germany.

- The fact that a party like the AfD can continue to gain traction with such ideas is partly due to a distorted perception of security in Germany. While current studies indicate that the greatest threat to Germany comes from both right and left-wing 'extremist groups', over 80% of Germans perceive 'Islamist' groups as the greatest threat to their security.
- The growing economic uncertainty, fear of social decline resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the sanctions against Russia, along with dissatisfaction with the current government, further fuel the rejection of migrants which usually focusses on Muslims and people of color.

### State-funded educational booklet being promoted for use in school reiterates anti-Palestinian propaganda, while Palestine solidarity continues to be attacked

- The almost unequivocally pro-Israel and anti-Palestinian stance of the German federal government and state media has exacerbated the situation for Muslims in Germany.

Although the numbers of Islamophobically motivated incidents in recent months are not yet available, counseling and support services report a noticeable increase in those seeking help.

- In Berlin, a coalition of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social

Democratic Party (SPD) advocated for the use of [a brochure compiled by the Masiyot association](#) and funded by the Berlin State Center for Political Education, concerning the founding of the state of Israel.

Experts deem the content of the brochure problematic as it includes unsubstantiated and debunked pro-Zionist claims, such as:

- The Nakba being a campaign by Arabs, i.e. that Israel did not expel 750,000 Palestinians.
  - Israel being an anti-racist, anti-fascist, and anti-colonial state
  - Israel legally purchased the areas currently inhabited by Israelis, which is only true for about 6% of the territory.
  - Attacks on Palestinians and their villages before the founding of the state are downplayed, portrayed anachronistically, and presented as 'self-defense' by Jews.
  - The brochure uses the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism, rejected by numerous anti-Semitism experts as it hinders criticism of the state of Israel.
- A 'scandal' surrounding the closing gala of this year's Berlinale film festival exemplifies the way that expressions of solidarity with Palestine in Germany are stigmatised and condemned.

Following verbal and symbolic demands from numerous jury members and awardees for a ceasefire in Gaza, as well as labeling Israel as "genocidal" and practicing "apartheid," there was a political and media outcry.

The individuals involved were accused of "anti-Semitism" and of "hatred against Israel" by media and politicians, accompanied by calls for the removal of the festival leadership. The affected persons, including the festival director, even report receiving death threats against them and their families.