

# Germany briefing

## November / December 2023

### German government continues offering staunch moral and material support to Israel

- The German government abstained from voting on the UN resolution on a ceasefire in Gaza, arguing that the resolution did not explicitly condemn Hamas' action on 7 October because it did not mention "who is the aggressor and who is the victim in this situation" (Max Lucks, member of the Bundestag for the governing Green Party).

However, by abstaining - as opposed to rejecting the resolution - the intention was supposedly to pay attention to the suffering of the people of Gaza.

- A letter dated 22 December 2023, which is [available on the German government's website](#), reaffirms Germany's staunchly pro-Israel position as such:

"Israel has the right to defend itself against these barbaric attacks, to protect its citizens and to prosecute the attackers. The German government is also supporting Israel with military and medical equipment."

- A contextualisation of the events of 7 October or critical statements about the actions of the Israeli military and the Israeli government have not emerged publicly within German discourse.

This is regularly justified in terms of Germany's 'historical responsibility' towards the state of Israel as a Jewish state, whereby the founding of the state of Israel is often described as a consequence of the Holocaust. This historically false fact is usually reproduced in the media without being contradicted and thus contributes to its entrenchment among the German population.

- Germany's attitude towards Israel is by no means new.

Although support for the Palestinian cause also exists among non-Muslim Germans, the attitude and statements of the German government since 7 October may create a long-term problem for social coexistence in Germany.

Its unconditional support for Israel and its definition of Israel as a German reason of state, as a core value of German society, and its silence about the situation in Gaza and the West Bank promotes the dissociation of Muslims and people of Palestinian origin in Germany with the German state. Such a dissociation is problematic, especially in light of the fact that many Muslims already feel alienated due to their Muslim identity and the Islamophobic rhetoric of numerous politicians and the media under the guise of combating "Islamism".

## **Pro-Palestine demonstrations continue to be beset by bans or restrictions**

- In recent weeks, there have been an increasing number of bans by local security authorities or courts of first instance on pro-Palestinian demonstrations, which have occasionally been lifted following a further appeal.

At the same time, authorised demonstrations have been subject to numerous restrictions regarding permitted and prohibited slogans. While "Stop the genocide" was declared permitted by a court in Frankfurt, the slogan "From the River to the Sea - Palestine will be free" or the display of a map of the entire area of historic Palestine from the Jordan river to the Red Sea in Palestinian colours is widely banned.

- Since Hamas was banned at the beginning of November, all symbols associated with it have also been prohibited.

## **Bill debated on Combating "political Islamism" threatening further restrictions on Muslim civil organisations in Germany**

- On 13 December, the German Bundestag [debated a bill](#) to combat "political Islamism". Among other things, this bill provides for massive restrictions on donations to Islamic institutions from abroad and, at the same time, an expansion of the possibilities for monitoring the finances of Islamic organisations.
- The final passages also reflect the notion that anti-Semitism is primarily a problem imported by Muslim migrants - a narrative which has experienced another massive upswing since 7 October.
- This bill is part of a long-running process aimed at establishing and promoting a "German", permissible Islam, while undesirable Islamic organisations and actors - often declared to be Islamist - are increasingly restricted.

## **Church cardinal calls for Islam to be 'stopped'**

- A few days ago, Reinhard Marx, Cardinal of the Catholic Church in Munich, described Islam as "a religion that demands the annihilation of the Jewish state" and which must therefore be stopped.

Furthermore, according to the Cardinal, the representatives of Islam "in their overwhelming majority do not want to abandon the idea of proselytising, even by force if necessary".

- While German media have talked extensively on an increase of anti-Semitic incidents since 7 October, the same does not apply to Islamophobic incidents, although the relevant reporting centers did report them.