

German military setting up a new homeland security division

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20 January 2025

Germany's ruling class is systematically pushing ahead with its military buildup and war preparations in the federal election campaign. On 11 January, the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) announced the establishment of a new homeland security division. According to an army spokesman, it will consist of reservists and active-duty soldiers. It is to be placed under unified command and will become operational on 1 April 2025.

The formation of the new division is aimed at a massive expansion of the armed forces. Currently, the army consists of three divisions, each with around 20,000 soldiers. The fourth major unit is now being added for homeland security. It will initially comprise 6,000 soldiers but will gradually be increased to at least a high five-digit number.

The division will combine the existing homeland security regiments and companies. In 2021, Home Guard Regiment 1 was set up in Bavaria, followed by Home Guard Regiment 2 in North Rhine-Westphalia in 2022, Home Guard Regiment 3 in Lower Saxony in 2023 and Home Guard Regiment 4 with companies from Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Schleswig-Holstein, and Home Guard Regiment 5 in Hesse in 2024. Preparations are currently under way to set up further regiments, including Home Guard Regiment 6 in Berlin.

The creation of the new division is part of the structural reform of the Bundeswehr that Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (Social Democrat, SPD) launched last April. After two devastating defeats in the 20th century, it aims to re-equip Germany with a war army appropriately structured and led under the slogan "Bundeswehr of the Future."

"The armed forces new target structure" is "significantly less top-heavy than the status quo and is clearly geared towards operational planning and command in an emergency," according to the reforms adopted a year ago. The aim is "to establish a war-ready command structure and to create the conditions for consistently strengthening the troops."

On the reorganisation and restructuring of the homeland security forces, the military states:

The homeland security forces will be transferred to the army sector, according to the principle of "organize as you fight," after they have been fully established, because in an emergency they will be deployed in country. The homeland security forces will follow the task of coordinating the recruitment and training of reservists.

This is unequivocal. In line with the goals set by Pistorius and the entire ruling class to make Germany "war-ready" (*kriegstüchtig*) again, all military and civilian organisational areas will be directly aligned with the maxim "organize as you fight" and will grow massively. As early as April 2021, the then-federal coalition of the Christian Democrats (CDU) and SPD introduced so-called "voluntary military service in homeland security." The Ministry of Defence is currently working on the reintroduction of compulsory military service.

In a full-scale war against Russia, which the NATO powers are actively preparing and provoking through their constant escalation of the war in Ukraine, the homeland security division would play a central role. According to a report by the Bundeswehrverband (German Armed Forces Association), in the event of war, the domestic security forces are to "protect ports, railway facilities and goods transshipment points, as well as pipelines, roads for troop deployment, bridges, transport hubs and digital infrastructure." They are "thus also to secure Germany's role as a NATO base of operations and hub."

The secret "Operation Plan Germany" (OPLAN DEU), which is more than 1,000 pages long and has been developed and continuously updated by the Bundeswehr's Territorial Command since March 2023, underlines how concretely these plans are being worked on. The OPLAN is a blueprint for the total mobilisation of society for war. In an overview brochure published by the Bundeswehr, the following is stated about the plan's objectives:

It brings together the central military components of national and alliance defence in Germany with the necessary civilian support services in an operationally executable plan. It thus provides for the planning so that in the event of a crisis or conflict, after a political decision has been made, targeted action can be taken. It defines procedures, processes and responsibilities for protecting and defending Germany together with other state and civil actors... and for ensuring the deployment of allied forces across and through Germany to NATO's eastern flank. The aim is to be able to act quickly across all departmental and national borders.

Last year, homeland security forces were involved in NATO's Steadfast Defender manoeuvres for the first time in this context. With around 90,000 troops, more than 50 warships, including aircraft carriers and destroyers, 80 combat aircraft, helicopters and drones, as well as over 1,000 armoured vehicles, it was NATO's largest military manoeuvre since the end of the Cold War. The exercise took place in Scandinavia and the Baltic states, went as far as Poland, Romania and Germany, and simulated a military buildup against Russia. The WSWS wrote in an article:

This is not just a training exercise, but the escalation of NATO's war with Russia in Ukraine into a world war that encompasses the whole of Europe. Leading NATO officers do not mince their words. In Brussels, the chairman of the NATO Military Committee, Dutch Admiral Rob Bauer, called for a "reshaping of NATO's warfare." "It cannot be taken for granted that we live in peace," Bauer said. In the event of war, he added, "the whole of society will be involved, whether we like it or not."

Since then, the militarisation of society demanded by the ruling class has been pushed forward ever more aggressively. In a keynote speech on 12 December, the new NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said, "It is time to switch to a war mentality. And to get our arms production and defence spending into high gear." It was clear that "much more" than two percent of GDP had to be spent on defence, which meant "less spending on other priorities" such as "pensions, health and social security systems."

In Germany's federal election campaign, parties and politicians are outdoing each other with their demands for

ever higher military spending. For example, the Green Party's chancellor candidate Robert Habeck has spoken in favour of increasing the regular military budget to 3.5 percent of GDP, which would correspond to a tripling, or increase to €150 billion. The chancellor candidate of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), Alice Weidel, spoke recently in favour of an increase to 5 percent of GDP. That would amount to well over 40 percent of the current federal budget.

In a recent interview with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Defence Minister Pistorius made it clear that these war-mongering plans are shared by the SPD. "Two percent will not be enough," he said. "Whether the mere quota lies at two-and-a-half, three-and-a-half or five percent—as Donald Trump demands—is not the only decisive factor." It was just as important "that we have sufficient capabilities to meet NATO requirements."

Germany "will have to bear a large share of this, and that will cost many billions of euros extra each year," Pistorius continued. "In case of doubt, we will have to talk about three percent rather than two percent. We need to rethink external security." He added that he was speaking about "next generation security."

More appropriate would be "next generation world war." Even if Pistorius claims that the additional billions cannot be paid "from the current budget, at least in the first few years," it is clear that nothing will be left of workers' democratic and social rights when it comes to the plans for rearmament.

In this respect, too, the establishment of the homeland security division is a warning. According to the Bundeswehr Association, the "homeland security forces" can be deployed "in peacetime ... to provide assistance in the event of serious accidents, terrorist attacks or pandemics." This means nothing less than the unconstitutional deployment of the Bundeswehr domestically, including to suppress strikes and revolutionary struggles by the working class.



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