

# German police raid pro-Palestinian association in Hesse

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In the early hours of January 22, more than 70 members of the Hesse State Criminal Investigation Office and the police raided the homes of nine members of the Palästina e.V. association. They confiscated hard drives, written documents, mobile phones, computers and SIM cards, which are now being analysed.

The raid was initiated by the Interior Ministry of the Christian Democrat (CDU)-Social Democrat (SPD) state executive under Boris Rhein in Wiesbaden. Interior Minister Roman Poseck (CDU) said that it was intended to send a “clear signal against antisemitism.” However, there have been no specific accusations relating to actual criminal offences, attacks or threats against Jews; the members of the association are not accused of any of these offences.

The Interior Ministry wants to ban the association because it promotes solidarity with the Palestinians and protests against the genocide in Gaza. The more openly Benjamin Netanyahu’s far-right regime is waging a genocidal campaign against the Palestinian population in Gaza—and now also in the West Bank—the more ruthlessly the German authorities are cracking down on any criticism of it.

Interior Minister Poseck accused Palästina e.V. of violating “the idea of international understanding,” which is a specific ground for banning an association in Germany, representing an “anti-Israeli and antisemitic world view” and spreading “hatred of Israel and antisemitic slogans.” Behind the solidarity with Palestine was “actual hatred of Jews, which we must fight with all constitutional means,” the minister claimed.

He added that he was “deeply ashamed that Jews in our country are being threatened and no longer feel safe,” indirectly implying that Palästina e.V. was

attacking or threatening Jews living in Germany.

None of this is true. The association, which was founded in January 2022, endeavours to promote understanding between Palestinians living in Hesse and Germans. It holds public rallies for the oppressed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and organises cultural festivals—such as on November 25 last year at the Hauptwache in downtown Frankfurt, where there were Palestinian foods to eat, as well as music and theatre, arts and crafts, exhibitions and literature on the subject.

In addition to solidarity “with all forms of Palestinian resistance,” the association’s statutes also explicitly commit to the fight against antisemitism.

“Palestinian solidarity and the fight against antisemitism (hostility towards Judaism) are not mutually exclusive,” it states. “They must be thought of and conducted together. We vehemently oppose the equation of Zionism and Judaism. We do not tolerate anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian, anti-Semitic (i.e. anti-Jewish racism) or other inhumane positions and attitudes.”

The association also works regularly with Jewish organisations, such as most recently at the Palestine Conference in Frankfurt, which was actively supported by the Jewish Voice for a Just Peace in the Middle East.

The attack on Palästina e.V. is part of the growing suppression of any opposition to war and social cuts.

This became particularly clear when the Hesse Interior Ministry, citing the *Verfassungsschutz* (Office for the Protection of the Constitution, as Germany’s domestic secret service is called), declared that leading members of Palästina e.V. “belong to the left-wing extremist arm of antisemitism” and that there were “numerous links to like-minded organisations that are

part of the left-wing extremist spectrum.”

According to the Federal Ministry of the Interior in a written statement directed against the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party), the *Verfassungsschutz* defines left-wing extremism as “fighting for a democratic, egalitarian, socialist society,” “agitation against supposed ‘imperialism’ and ‘militarism,’” and “‘thinking in class categories’.”

The propaganda directed against migrants and refugees, which is now once again dominating the federal election campaign, is also aimed at suppressing the democratic rights of the entire working class. In its coalition agreement, the Hesse state government had already laid down the threats to the people now affected by the raid.

With the active involvement of Nancy Faeser, the Federal Interior Minister and former chair of the Hesse SPD, political guidelines were set out that disregard current law and make a mockery of the freedom of opinion and organisation enshrined in the constitution.

Migrants are required to “integrate,” which according to the SPD and CDU includes not only a commitment to the general values of the constitution, but also the unconditional recognition of Israel’s right to exist.

One section of the coalition agreement is entitled: “We reaffirm the guarantee of Israel’s right to exist as a German affair of state.” It cites “antisemitic” (meaning anti-Israel) activities as grounds for refusing German citizenship. People with dual citizenship can even lose their German citizenship.

Since then, the Hesse state government has repeatedly taken action against pro-Palestinian activities, most recently by banning the international academic conference “Talking about (the Silencing of) Palestine” from Goethe University in Frankfurt.



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