

Authorisation for criminal prosecution

As early as 6 January 2014, pursuant to section 129b (1), third sentence, of the German Criminal Code, the Bundesministerium für Justiz und Verbraucherschutz (Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection) granted – in response to IS activities – authorisation for the prosecution of offences relating to IS members or IS supporters who are German nationals or who are residing resp. starting activities in Germany.

Ban on activities

On 12 September 2014, as a further measure, the Federal Minister of the Interior placed a ban on IS' activities in Germany.

This ban covers the following activities:

- any participation in the social media and in demonstrations staged on behalf of IS,
- public use and the spread of IS logos and symbols,
- any kind of support (e.g. raising funds and material as well as recruiting combatants).

With the implementation of the prohibition order, these activities are punishable offences.

Conclusions

For some time now, nearly all the states of the European Union have been within the target spectrum of internationally acting jihadist organisations, with a potential threat mainly emanating from radicalised lone actors or very small groups. Especially IS – in the framework of its propaganda activities – has recently called for attacks to be committed worldwide on those states and their people which resp. who have formed an alliance with the USA in fighting against the caliphate.

However, besides the political and purely military commitment in crisis areas and war zones, publishing, fostering or tolerating Islam-critical behaviour (e.g. ban on wearing full-body veils, caricaturing the founder of Islam Muhammad, ban on the construction of minarets or disrespectful handling of religious writings) continue to be important criteria regarding the threat posed to individual states.

Prevention and De-radicalisation

Radicalisation processes have complex reasons and motivations. Especially young people are susceptible to Islamist propaganda, and they change notably. As a rule, such processes of change do not proceed unnoticed and require civil society involvement to halt them. For further information on prevention and de-radicalisation, please contact:

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF)

For persons seeking advice and support because they have noticed that a person in their environment is undergoing a process of Islamist radicalisation.

E-Mail: beratung@bamf.bund.de

Phone: 0911/943 43 43

Hotline – Call to take action against terrorism and violence

For persons who are aware of any possibly planned Islamist-motivated acts of violence or terrorist attacks.

E-Mail: HiT@bfv.bund.de

Phone: 0221/792-3366

Further information please see:

www.verfassungsschutz.de



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Bundesamt für
Verfassungsschutz

The Islamic State (IS) Threat to Germany?



Characterisation of the „Islamic State“

Currently, the Islamic State (IS) is considered the best organised and best armed organisation in the field of Islamist terrorism. It has substantial financial resources and takes an international and, at the same time, integrative approach. Besides, its extreme brutality sets it apart from al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. Furthermore, with the proclamation of the „caliphate“ in June 2014, the Sunni terrorist militia has meanwhile made perfectly clear its claim to leadership in global jihad. Fighting on behalf of IS currently includes setting up a real Islamic state on the basis of its particular and extremist interpretation of Islam.

„Caliphate“

A caliphate is the institution of the supreme (Sunni) secular and religious ruler within the Muslim world, with this function simultaneously reflecting the unity of the Muslim community.

The caliph is the head of the community of believers, and he is i.a. in charge of enforcing the Islamic laws, of defending and expanding territorial dominion as well as of controlling the government.

IS' attractiveness has resulted in other Islamist-terrorist groupings in various parts of the world having obviously turned away from al-Qaeda in the meantime so as to turn towards IS instead.

This development also has an impact on the Islamist scene in Germany:

- There is an increasing number of jihadist-motivated departures for Syria and Iraq, because with IS an allegedly „true“ Islamic state has been proclaimed by now.
- The number of jihad returnees from Syria and Iraq continues to rise, with individuals among them who have gained relevant combat experience.
- The massive fighting between IS and Kurds in Iraq and Syria has been reflected in Germany through partly violent clashes between Salafists and Kurds.

Propaganda activities

Regarding its propaganda activities, IS acts in a professional way and pursues a global strategy. Meanwhile, it also shows a large-scale presence in social networks, with its main concern being to motivate radicalised Muslims to leave for combat areas.



In terms of content, IS propaganda i.a. aims at portraying a real „Islamic State“, which Muslims from all over the world are welcome to join. Besides, since the US-led air strikes against its infrastructures, IS has explicitly called for attacks to be committed in the West.

Impact on the Salafist scene in Germany

Meanwhile, also German IS combatants call for offences to be carried out in Germany. Such appeals are especially directed to the Salafist scene which is to be incited to acts of violence against supposed „unbelievers“. This modus operandi is in line with the concept of „individual jihad“ propagated for several years now.

German jihadists mainly publish their propaganda in a decentralised way through social networks or video platforms. At present, the established Arabic jihadist Internet forums only play a minor role because social networks allow a nearly unlimited dissemination of relevant contents. Everyone has the possibility of acting as his/her own propaganda producer and of passing on personal jihad experiences in real time.

Threat posed by returnees

After returning, individuals who have undergone training at a camp or who have actively participated in combat missions in Syria or Iraq, pose a considerable security threat to the German state and its citizens.

Both their skills acquired in the combat areas and their possible brutalisation through the excessive violence experienced there can well serve as a motivation basis for them to plan and implement attacks. Besides, within the Salafist scene, such returnees are often regarded as role models capable of encouraging other scene members to leave for jihad zones.



Measures

At the earliest possible stage, the German security authorities try to prevent individuals from preparing for departure and participation in combat missions, by applying the following measures:

- prohibition from leaving the country
- withdrawal of passport
- limitation on the validity of the identity card to Germany
- border search alerts.

If the security authorities are not in a position to prevent an individual from leaving the country, they make every effort to early identify any indications to suggest that this individual intends to return. Close co-ordination on a national and international level is of particular importance in this context.