



Anti-Semitic Protest: Basel Police Allow Unauthorized Rally at That Location

On Saturday, August 29, an unauthorized demonstration titled “Death to Zionism” took place in the city of Basel ([as reported by FokusIsrael.ch](https://fokusisrael.ch)). The Basel government had strongly condemned the rally in advance. Nevertheless, the Basel cantonal police initially allowed the approximately 300 demonstrators to gather on Theaterplatz. Later, they merely prevented a march through the city center and conducted identity checks.

By David Spuler

The timing of the demonstration was deliberately chosen: On August 29, 1897, the First Zionist Congress began just a few steps away from Theaterplatz in Basel. It was there that the movement was organized to realize the Jewish people’s right to national self-determination.

The “Basel for Palestine” call linked this date to the slogan “Death to Zionism” and the red triangle, which is also used in the propaganda of the terrorist organization Hamas. The organizers denied that they were calling for violence against people. They had meant the end of a political ideology, ref.ch reported. In reality, however, the call—combined with the inverted red triangle that Hamas uses to symbolize its Jewish terror targets—was a call for the murder of Jews.

The authorities therefore deemed this an “explicit incitement to violence” and ruled that the rally could not be authorized. The Basel Cantonal Police announced this [four days before the demonstration](#). For its part, the Basel Public Prosecutor’s Office opened an investigation against persons unknown on suspicion of publicly inciting crime or violence.

Basel Police Refrained from Breaking Up the Rally

On the scene, the police dialogue team attempted to make contact with the demonstrators. They refused to engage in conversation. The police then announced that they would tolerate a peaceful stationary demonstration. When some individuals covered their faces and began preparing to march, the police cordoned off part of the crowd.

According to the police’s official report, 174 people were checked and turned away. At least four are expected to be charged with obstructing an official act. One person was arrested for an offense unrelated to the demonstration. Two minors remained



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in police custody until their parents picked them up.

A baton, protective goggles, items used to conceal one's face, and propaganda material bearing Hamas symbols were seized. According to police, pepper spray was used after a female protester physically assaulted an officer. The water cannon on standby was not deployed. No injuries were reported. Steinenberg and Theaterstrasse were closed for about eight hours; public transportation returned to normal afterward.

Confidence in oneself and in the rule of law has been undermined

The conduct of the Basel cantonal police leaves a bad taste in one's mouth. While it did prevent a demonstration march through the city center, But beforehand, they allowed demonstrators to express solidarity with Hamas—a terrorist organization banned in Switzerland—whose calls, in the run-up to the rally, the public prosecutor's office had classified as public incitement to crime and violence due to their anti-Semitism and hostility toward Israel.

This passivity stood in stark contrast to the harsh words and announcements made by the Basel government and the cantonal police prior to the rally, with their call of "Death to Zionism." In doing so, the government and police have not only undermined their own credibility, but also the rule of law.