



Criminal proceedings over the call for a demonstration under the slogan “Death to Zionism”

An unauthorized demonstration has been announced for Saturday afternoon, August 29, on Theaterplatz in Basel. The call to action includes the slogans “Free Palestine” and “Death to Zionism.” The date was chosen deliberately: Exactly 129 years earlier, on August 29, 1897, the First Zionist Congress—convened and led by Theodor Herzl—began at the Stadtcasino in Basel.

“The violent call for an anti-Israel demonstration achieves nothing but fear and rejection,” writes the **Basler Zeitung** in an editorial. It argues that a clear line has been crossed.

No permit application has been received for the announced rally. The Basel-Stadt Cantonal Police considers the rally, as announced, to be inconsistent with constitutional rights and therefore ineligible for authorization. In its press release, the police state: “Freedom of speech and freedom of assembly have their limits where violence is promoted.”

The police will take the necessary precautions for Saturday. For tactical reasons, they are not providing any further details. It therefore remains unclear how they will proceed if demonstrators gather at Theaterplatz.

Meanwhile, the Basel-Stadt Public Prosecutor’s Office has received a criminal complaint against persons unknown in connection with the call for a demonstration. The Public Prosecutor’s Office has opened an investigation on suspicion of publicly inciting a crime or acts of violence.

The complaint primarily cites Article 261bis of the Swiss Criminal Code (StGB), which pertains to discrimination and incitement to hatred. Alternatively, it cites Article 259 of the Swiss Criminal Code (StGB), which pertains to publicly inciting crime or violence. The proceedings must determine whether the elements of the respective criminal offenses have been met.

Several far-left groups, including the “Basel4Palestine” collective, have been circulating the call for some time. The poster shows an Israeli tank marked with an inverted red triangle. Hamas uses this symbol in propaganda videos to identify Israeli targets.

FokusIsrael.ch had already reached out last week to Stephanie Eymann, Basel’s Director of Justice and Security, and to Thomas Würgler, commander of the Basel-Stadt cantonal police. The editorial team warned against the anti-Semitic tone of



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the appeal and its equating of Israel’s existence with a crime.

In a guest commentary on FokusIsrael.ch, Alfred Bodenheimer, professor of the history of religion and Jewish literature at the University of Basel, also criticizes the Federal Commission Against Racism (EKR). According to him, the EKR declined to issue a statement regarding the rally. It reportedly told Tamedia that the situation was too complex.

Bodenheimer writes: “For the Jewish population of Basel and Switzerland, this turning a blind eye is devastating. For, of course, it is not the State of Israel that is primarily threatened in this appeal bearing the Hamas triangle, but rather the Jewish population of the region. They are being told in increasingly drastic terms that, as long as they support the very existence of this state, they will be accused of collaborating in crimes against humanity and, consequently—if one takes the appeal to its logical conclusion—are deserving of death.”

Read the full op-ed

here: <https://fokusisrael.ch/news/tod-den-juden-und-die-eidgenoessische-kommission-gegen-rassismus-schweigt/>