On Wednesday evening, February 18 participants in the Silent Walk Switzerland gathered at Paradeplatz in Zurich to send a silent but unmistakable signal against anti-Semitism and for Israel's right to exist. Guest speaker was EDU National Councillor Erich Vontobel, who focused on his parliamentary work against extremist structures in Switzerland – and described the terrorist attack at Bondi Beach as a warning signal for Europe.

Silent Walk Switzerland, launched in Zurich in 2024, has established itself as a regular format in several Swiss cities. The movement sees itself as non-partisan and is open to people of all backgrounds. Unlike conventional demonstrations, people do not march with slogans, but in silence – accompanied by music and framed by an opening and closing speech. Iranians in exile also regularly take part, expressing their solidarity with Israel and their hope for a free, secular Iran. The fact that the event is authorized and accompanied by police is now routine.

Parliamentary instruments work

EDU National Councillor Erich Vontobel from Wolfhausen used the speech before the start of the Silent Walk to present his latest interpellation, which he submitted in the 2025 winter session of the Swiss parliament. It is entitled "Extremist structures behind Israel-related protests – clarification and prevention" and demands answers to four key questions from the Federal Council.

Firstly, Vontobel is calling for consequences to be drawn from the Bondi Beach attack, the anti-Semitic terrorist attack in Sydney on December 14, 2025, in which 15 people were killed and over 40 injured during a Hanukkah celebration on the beach. Vontobel warns that Switzerland should not react "only when blood has been shed". Secondly, he wants to know whether the Swiss security services are investigating which organizations are behind certain demonstrations and whether there are networks between different groups. Thirdly, he asks about possible links between such demonstration organizers and organizations classified as terrorists, namely those associated with the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine). And fourthly, he demands an assessment of international activists who call for criminal acts or acts of sabotage in Switzerland or suggest their imitation.

“Globalize the Intifada” – more than just a slogan

A central theme of the speech was the radicalization of certain protest movements since 7 October 2023. Vontobel warned against trivializing the call to “Globalize the Intifada” as a harmless expression of opinion. Historically, the term “intifada” stands for violent uprisings characterized by terrorist attacks and rocket fire. Anyone chanting this slogan on European streets is calling for the Middle East conflict and its violence to be brought into Western societies. A slogan alone does not make a perpetrator, said Vontobel, but a climate in which violence is glorified and hatred of Jews is openly articulated is “extremely dangerous”. Radicalization rarely happens overnight, but grows gradually.

Ban on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard

Finally, Vontobel spoke about his second foreign policy concern: a ban on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Switzerland. He had already submitted a corresponding motion to the Foreign Affairs Committee in January 2026 – without success. He did not accept concerns about neutrality: Switzerland was free to ban such organizations, analogous to the existing ban on Hamas.

Vontobel referred to a Weltwoche article from January 24 in which he made the issue public. There, 74 percent of readers had supported the project. He announced that the proposal would probably be submitted directly to the National Council as a motion in the spring session in March 2026, where it would then be publicly debated.

Threefold mandate for civil society

Vontobel’s speech culminated in a threefold appeal: look, speak out, act. Europe’s history teaches us that unfavorable developments must be nipped in the bud. He promised to continue asking questions and exerting pressure in Bern – but emphasized that democracy does not live from parliamentarians alone, but from vigilant citizens.

“Israel’s right to exist is non-negotiable. The safety of Jewish people in Switzerland cannot be relativized. And calls for violence must have no place in our country,”

concluded Vontobel.