

PRESS RELEASE 08/2023

Ethics Council: Solidarity with Jewish people – opposing antisemitism resolutely

Berlin, 20 November 2023

Since Hamas' terrorist attack on Israel antisemitic statements and assaults have increased throughout Germany. In this situation, the Ethics Council declares:

“The atrocious terrorist attack by Hamas on 7 October caused immeasurable suffering in Israel and horrified the world. It also shocked us deeply. Since then, we have seen antisemitic statements, demonstrations and attacks around the world, including in Germany. Antisemitism is regaining strength or is becoming more visible again and even seems to gain social acceptance.

The sad truth is that already before 7 October 2023, Jewish life in Germany was repeatedly threatened. There has been an alarming resurgence of what many in Germany – wrongly – thought had been largely overcome after confronting the horrors of the national socialist era and the Holocaust: Jewish people are being threatened, subjected to hostility, vilification, hate and even physical violence. Buildings in which Jews live and work are being marked and vandalised, and Jewish institutions, from daycare centres to cemeteries, are being attacked. Openly antisemitic statements are being made in everyday conversation, on social media, but also on German streets. Too often this is met with silence, too often it is played down and relativised.

None of this is acceptable. Antisemitism – rejection of and threats to Jewish life, intimidation and defamation of Jews – must always and in every form be opposed and must certainly not be allowed to increase, as is currently the case. We must resolutely counter this. Jewish people must be able to live safely and in freedom in Germany.

Anyone who threatens Jewish life in Germany and tries to push it out of our midst is acting against the fundamental values of our society and constitution. It is the duty of the state to ensure that effective protection is granted. Legal provisions must be rigorously followed and applied; there must be no leniency with regard to resurgent antisemitism.

We all, that is society as a whole, bear responsibility. Public institutions must raise their voices against antisemitism. All people living in Germany are called upon to demonstrate civil courage, integrity and, if necessary, opposition – in the public sphere, but also in their private and professional lives. We call on everyone to actively approach Jewish people and their institutions, organisations and representatives and to emphasise that they are not alone, thus sending an urgently needed signal of solidarity. Their suffering and concerns touch us deeply. We stand by their side now and in the future. Those who attack them attack us all.”

Members

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