

German law enforcement and judiciary maintain “sole perpetrator” narrative in far-right terrorist threats

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Lawyers, cultural workers, investigative journalists, representatives of faith communities and leading politicians have been threatened in Germany for almost three years by a group calling itself “NSU 2.0.” The perpetrators—whose moniker is a reference to the fascist terrorist group National Socialist Underground (NSU) responsible for the murder of nine immigrants and a police officer—have repeatedly made use of confidential information retrieved from police databases.

On Tuesday night, special forces of the Hesse state police arrested a 53-year-old right-wing extremist in Berlin, seizing a ready-to-use firearm and several data storage devices. The investigating Hesse State Criminal Police Office and Interior Minister Peter Beuth (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) have since presented the man as being the sole author of all the threatening messages.

The recipients of the anonymous threats of murder and violence include Seda Ba?ay-Y?ld?z and Mehmet Daimag?ler (lawyers acting for the NSU victims), journalists Hengameh Yaghoobifarah and Deniz Y?cel and cabaret artist ?dil Baydar. They also include around 30 federal and state parliamentarians from the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the Greens, the Left Party and the CDU, as well as Aiman Mazyek, chairman of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, and Josef Schuster, chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

The Hesse state Interior Ministry reports that at least 133 threatening messages have now been sent to 32 people and 60 institutions originating from “NSU 2.0.” The messages contain private, personal data on a total of 20 of the victims, many of whom had previously been the subject of searches in police databases. Death threats were also addressed to state Interior Minister Beuth and Hesse state Premier Volker Bouffier (CDU).

The man arrested, Alexander Horst M., is a single, longterm unemployed man with a criminal record. He is said to have posed as a criminal police officer in the early 1990s so as to request information from the police. According to the investigators, the man also obtained the private information of “NSU 2.0” victims in the same way—including the first name of a two-year-old child and several nonpublic residential addresses.

What role this man actually played is currently still unclear. However, there is no doubt that his arrest provides the politically responsible authorities in the Interior Ministry the opportunity to

once again cover up the wide extent of terrorist networks inside the German state apparatus and to exonerate the police of any suspicion of wrongdoing.

Beuth himself expressed this openly on Tuesday, telling the press, “According to everything we know today, a Hesse police officer was never responsible for the series of NSU 2.0 threatening emails.” Should the man be confirmed as the perpetrator, “the entire Hesse police force can breathe a sigh of relief,” he said. The “suspicion” about an internal perpetrator, which “has weighed heavily on the Hesse police for a long time,” was now lifted, the interior minister’s message stated.

In the previous months, the investigating authorities had developed the narrative of a “technically skilled lone perpetrator,” who had succeeded in concealing his identity for years “via the darknet.” In July last year, Beuth had declared that a “uniform language style” in the threatening messages could “not be established.” Now, allegedly, in close cooperation with the Federal Criminal Police Office, it is precisely this style that is said to have led directly to the suspected perpetrator in Berlin via blog entries on a neo-Nazi website.

That this version of events is completely implausible and leaves “many questions unanswered” is noted in numerous reports and commentaries in the bourgeois press. Rather, in their totality, the information and investigative findings available so far paint a picture of a criminal network of armed neo-Nazis and right-wing extremist police officers, which is shielded and minimised by the law enforcement agencies and leading politicians.

In the course of nationwide investigations into the “NSU 2.0” case alone, thousands of illegal data searches have been discovered at German police authorities, as well as criminally relevant Nazi propaganda and calls for violence in countless police chat groups.

Journalist and author Aiko Kempen (“Auf dem Rechten Weg? Rassisten und Neonazis in der deutschen Polizei”—“On the right-wing path? Racists and Neo-Nazis in the German Police”) speaks of a total of “well over a thousand cases” in which “the criminal offence of using the symbols of unconstitutional organisations is involved,” including swastikas, SS runes and Hitler salutes. In addition, there were “hundreds of cases of alleged incitement of racial hatred.”

As the “Tagesschau” news programme recently reported, however, the court cases against right-wing extremist police

officers are usually dropped, despite comprehensive evidence being available. The reason is that the officers allegedly do not “publicly” call for violence against immigrants and glorify the Nazi regime but keep it to themselves.

If a case is not dropped, it is instead systematically separated from the overall issue. For example, senior public prosecutor Michael Loer explained on Wednesday that there are currently “no further links” between the radical right-wing police groups in Hesse and the authors of the “NSU 2.0” threatening messages. The associated court proceedings were therefore being conducted “completely independently” of each other.

However, especially in the original case of Frankfurt lawyer Ba?ay-Y?ld?z—who remains at the centre of right-wing attacks—the facts suggest that the investigations are systematically aimed at covering up the role of right-wing extremist police officers.

Ba?ay-Y?ld?z had received a fax in August 2018 threatening to “slaughter” her then two-year-old daughter. The daughter’s name, which the sender used in his message, had been retrieved from a Frankfurt police computer less than an hour before the fax was received.

The account used for the computer query was quickly identified, as was its owner. However, the police officer was initially investigated only superficially because she stated at the time that she had written down her access information “on a piece of paper,” which was easily accessible. Later, she was identified as a member of a chat group in which police officers gave open expression to their hatred of immigrants, Jews and people with disabilities.

In the case of one member of the group, investigators came across a “Nazi museum” that the police officer had set up in his barn. The subsequent trial for inciting racial hatred and illegal possession of weapons, which could have also brought to light further details about the policewoman in question, was completely separated from the investigation into the “NSU 2.0.”

In the case of cabaret artist ?dil Baydar as well, the investigators were able to quickly trace which police officer had logged on at the time her data was retrieved. However, the lead prosecutor’s office did not question him until six months after taking over the case, citing the coronavirus crisis as the reason for the delay.

A second Hesse police officer, who was considered a suspect in connection with the computer query about Ba?ay-Y?ld?z, was transferred from Frankfurt to Berlin in the spring of 2019 without his new employers being informed of the investigation against him.

Left Party politician Anne Helm (parliamentary group leader in the Berlin state legislature) had pointed out that the man shared information about ongoing investigations in a chat group that also included members of Berlin’s Neukölln neo-Nazi scene. According to Helm, members of the scene had, in turn, learned of private details about her through clandestine spying, which was included in a threatening letter addressed to her. The police officer was only suspended six months after his transfer.

In Bavaria, in the summer of 2020, investigators finally arrested the former police officer and neo-right-wing actor Hermann S. and his wife. Although 12 letters “with insulting, inciting and threatening content” could be attributed to the couple, both were

released a few days later. The investigators described the well-connected man, who had been found with several weapons, as a “copycat.”

The fairy tale of the “lone perpetrator,” which is always propagated by the German authorities in connection with fascist terrorism, flies in the face of a sober consideration of the facts and is correspondingly hated among workers and young people as well as the victims of state and right-wing violence.

Although there are extensive nationwide links and the addressees of the threatening messages live in eight different federal states, the Hesse authorities have still been allowed to investigate themselves for almost three years now. Yet Hesse is one of the federal states in which the symbiosis between the state apparatus and right-wing extremists is particularly well documented.

Currently, for example, another officer at the Frankfurt police headquarters is being investigated for allegedly misappropriating firearms from the evidence room on a large scale and selling them to individuals and companies. According to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, this involves “a three-digit number of pistols, revolvers, long guns and ammunition” whose whereabouts are “currently completely unclear.” The detective superintendent responsible for the weapons had also pursued “unauthorised secondary employment” for a right-wing extremist mercenary company, including in Iraq.

Probably the best-known example of the involvement of the Hesse authorities with right-wing extremist murderers is the case of Andreas Temme, an agent of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, as the secret service is called, whose own right-wing extremist convictions have long been known. Temme was at the scene of the NSU murder of Halit Yozgat in 2006 but claims to have been unaware of the killing of the young internet café owner taking place. The secret service then transferred Temme to the Kassel district office of CDU politician Walter Lübcke. In his role as a secret service agent, Temme was in contact, “on official business,” with Stephan Ernst, who has since been convicted of Lübcke’s murder.

On the day of the court verdict against Ernst, pupils of the Walter Lübcke School in Wolfhagen held a vigil at the Higher Regional Court and demanded tougher prosecution of right-wing extremist violence. The next day, the school received a bomb threat signed “NSU 2.0.”



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