Doctor takes her own life in Austria following threats from anti-vaxxers

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Austrian medical doctor Lisa-Maria Kellermayr was found dead in her local practice last Friday. She apparently committed suicide after receiving numerous threats from right-wing anti-vaxxers.

At the end of June, the family doctor had announced the closure of her practice in Seewalchen. She had been receiving death threats for no less than seven months. After the police and authorities did nothing, Dr. Kellermayr had to take security measures herself.

She hired a security service, which assigned an employee to the practice during office hours. A panic room was set up in the practice and several video cameras installed. She had spent around €100,000 on this.

In mid-July, she declared that she could no longer afford the enormous costs and that her employees were no longer able to work "under normal circumstances." Therefore, she closed the practice at that time. Just one day before her death, she conducted an interview with *Der Spiegel*. There she explained how important the practice was to her and how much the loss hurt her.

Dr. Kellermayr had treated patients who had become infected right after the pandemic began. She always relied on the latest scientific evidence, advocated for extensive and rapid vaccinations and for necessary protective measures such as masks and social distancing. On social media, she warned of the dangers of infection.

This brought coronavirus deniers and anti-vaxxers from the far-right milieu to the scene. They deluged the doctor with a flood of hate messages. As the weekly magazine *Falter* reported, she was insulted as a "system sheep" and a "stupid sow," among other things. But it went much further. A certain "Claas, the killer" threatened to slaughter her after "painting the walls of the practice with the brains of your

employees." Other threats are so foul and violent that we will not reproduce them here.

The physician turned to the police and security authorities, but received no help. On the contrary, the Upper Austria police played a decisive role in making the doctor a target of the attacks.

Last year, Dr. Kellermayr tweeted about a demonstration by coronavirus deniers who, under the eyes of the police, had left the planned route and blocked the entrance to a hospital and the access road for emergency services.

Police responded by publicly calling the tweet a "false report," demonstratively standing behind the far-right coronavirus deniers and asserting there had been no obstruction or other criminal acts.

Coronavirus deniers then published Dr. Kellermayr's address on the internet and openly called for the doctor to be terrorised. A request to the police to remove the comment that had mobilized the right-wingers was ignored.

In the further course of events, it soon became apparent that this was not an oversight. The Upper Austrian police press spokesman told the Ö1 midday TV news journal that Dr. Kellermayr only wanted to "promote her own career" and "push herself into the public eye" by criticizing the police.

As the incidents reported became more and more brutal, the police investigated for a short time, only to halt all efforts again. There were "no recognizable indications of danger or suspicion," they claimed. Even when Dr. Kellermayr asked political representatives from all Austria's parliamentary parties for help, she did not receive it.

She received a similar response from the German authorities. A man from Bavaria, whose identity was known, tweeted that the doctor would be brought

before a "people's tribunal"—a thinly veiled death threat. Dr. Kellermayr took legal action against him. The German authorities, however, saw the statement as covered by freedom of expression and took no action.

In fact, it very quickly became clear that the far-right scene in Germany and Austria was behind the terror. Nella Al-Lami, an IT expert and hacker from Germany, came across the case and was able to find out the identity of "Claas the Killer" within a few hours. The person in question is a neo-Nazi known to the police in Germany.

The reaction of the Austrian authorities to Al-Lami's success in exposing the perpetrator was significant. The spokesman for the Wels public prosecutor's office, Christoph Weber, criticized the hacker. He said her research was "technically and substantively incomprehensible." It was not known, he said, whether she might not have researched the darknet for her conclusions.

The scandalous behaviour of the security authorities, which in Germany and Austria are themselves known to be riddled with far-right forces, played a central role in the tragic death of the self-sacrificing 36-year-old doctor.

But political responsibility lies with Austria's government, a coalition of Christian Democrats and Greens. The few crocodile tears shed by Viennese government officials after Dr. Kellermayr's death cannot hide this fact. It has de facto adopted the program of the extreme right in the pandemic and removed all protective measures. In doing so, it has strengthened and emboldened the forces that incited Dr. Kellermayr to her death.

Like all other governments worldwide, the People's Party (ÖVP) and the Greens are pursuing a herd immunity policy allowing the virus to spread throughout the population. Austria has played a pioneering role in this since the beginning of the pandemic—lockdown measures were lifted early on. As a result, the number of infections and deaths has kept reaching new records.

Most recently, the previously agreed upon mandatory vaccination programme was also abolished. Although this measure alone would not have prevented the spread of coronavirus, it would have contributed to the significantly better protection of large parts of the population against a severe illness following infection.

The Austrian government bears responsibility for the thousands of illnesses and deaths that have been accepted in order to ensure that the profit interests of a narrow elite went unthreatened since the beginning of the pandemic. So far, nearly 4.8 million people in Austria have been infected, and more than 20,000 have died from COVID-19.

Currently, the numbers are rising again: 1,600 people are currently undergoing treatment in hospital, 88 of whom are receiving intensive care. On Sunday, 5,714 new infections were reported. However, the infection figures do not reflect the actual situation by a long shot. Since testing facilities are hardly available anymore, experts assume infection figures are many times higher.

With the lifting of all quarantine regulations, which came into force on Monday, Chancellor Karl Nehammer (ÖVP) and Health Minister Johannes Rauch (Greens) have now fully adopted the demands of the far-right Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ). Only a few days earlier, the FPÖ's health spokesman Gerhard Kaniak had described "a continuation of the quarantine measures" as "obsolete."

It is this inhuman policy that strengthens right-wing extremist forces and encourages them to take action against anyone who calls for measures to contain the pandemic on a rational, scientific basis. In enforcing the brutal profits-before-lives policy, all the establishment parties are relying on the fascistic dregs of society.

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