

Germany's defence minister calls for total militarisation: "We have to become fit for war"

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The German government is using Israel's genocidal war against Gaza and the NATO war offensive against Russia to aggressively push the militarisation of domestic and foreign policy. This is underlined by statements made by Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (Social Democrat, SPD) in the latest edition of the ZDF programme "Berlin Direkt."

Addressing the intensification of international wars and crises and the German role in them, Pistorius said:

We need a change of mentality. In the troops, it is in full swing. I notice that, for example, when we talk about the Lithuanian brigade. We need it in the Defence Ministry, where we have set the course. But we also need it in society as a whole, and we also need it in politics. The federal government has clearly committed itself to the [NATO] two-percent target.

But, very importantly, the change of mentality in society is also right. We have to get used to the idea again that the danger of war could be looming in Europe, and that means we have to become fit for war, we have to be fit for defence, and we have to position the Bundeswehr [Armed Forces] and society for it.

Pistorius' statements are a serious warning. Almost eight decades after the fall of the Third Reich, the ruling class in Germany sees the time as having come to act openly as a war power again and to wage major war—with all the consequences.

The last time Germany was "capable of war" and

"capable of defence," it destroyed the entire continent and committed the greatest crimes in human history with the war of extermination against the Soviet Union and the murder of six million Jews in the Holocaust. To "set up society for this," the ruling class needed a fascist dictatorship that brutally suppressed any opposition.

All the official propaganda about "freedom" and "democracy" cannot hide the fact that the German bourgeoisie is again following these traditions and returning to the criminal aims and methods of the Nazis: a genocidal war policy to enforce imperialist interests abroad and the establishment of an authoritarian regime at home.

On ZDF, Pistorius once again "unreservedly" backed the genocidal actions of the far-right Netanyahu regime against the Palestinians, reminiscent of the Nazi suppression of the Jewish uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943 or the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. The carpet bombing by the Israeli army has already claimed the lives of 8,000 people and completely destroyed large parts of the Gaza Strip—including thousands of homes, schools, hospitals, mosques and churches.

In cold blood, Pistorius declared: "This is about self-defence and Israel's right to exist, and Germany is clearly one of those who say yes to this right without reservation. That is why it is our task to stand by Israel and at the same time to use our influence, as far as it is there and can be used, to ensure that there will be no further escalation."

The second part of the sentence is an outright lie. In fact, Berlin is not only supporting the genocide in Gaza, but is playing a central role in the imperialist powers' war build-up against Iran, which threatens to turn the

whole region into a deadly battlefield. The US has already sent two aircraft carriers, fighter planes and soldiers. And according to reports, the Bundeswehr has also deployed additional warships and more than 1,000 soldiers to the region in recent days.

Most of them were initially stationed on Cyprus. On the island in the eastern Mediterranean, which is barely 400 kilometres from Gaza, the Bundeswehr has set up a planning and command staff—officially for a possible evacuation mission—and positioned German Navy (KSM) special forces. Further soldiers from the Special Forces Command (KSK) are in Jordan. German soldiers and tanker aircraft are already deployed at the al-Azrak airbase as part of the international anti-ISIS mission (“Counter Daesh”).

German warships are also being mobilised. According to the German navy, the frigate *Baden-Württemberg* left Wilhelmshaven on October 20 “as the first class 125 ship” to take part in the UNIFIL mission off the Lebanese coast. It replaces the corvette *Oldenburg*, which is also to remain in the region. It will be joined by the task force supply vessel *Frankfurt am Main*. The largest German warship, with a length of 174 metres and a crew of 159, reportedly arrived at the Cypriot port of Limassol last week.

In fact, the ruling class is not concerned with saving German citizens or even “Jewish lives” in its military build-up, as the official propaganda would have us believe. As in Ukraine and Russia, German imperialism is pursuing geostrategic and economic interests in the Middle East and is willing to enforce them by military means.

When Pistorius calls for Germany to be “capable of war,” he dreams of wars for raw materials and spheres of influence all over the world.

In a recent guest article for *Die Welt*, he wrote: “At the same time, there are all kinds of reasons for us to broaden our gaze and get involved not only in our immediate neighbourhood, but also beyond. For example, in the Indo-Pacific—a region of the world that is becoming a growing challenge for our American friends as well as for us in the face of an increasingly assertive China that is in part challenging the rule-based order.”

He makes no secret of the overriding imperialist motives. “As a trading nation, we have a vital interest in stability and security in the Indo-Pacific. Free sea

routes, access, trade and cooperation in the region are of central importance for the world economy and thus also for us.” That is why Germany must also “become more present here.”

Workers and young people must realise that it is they who will pay in every way for the new global war madness of the ruling class: as cannon fodder on the battlefields and in the form of massive attacks on social and democratic rights to finance and enforce world war policies.

In another statement at the Federal Office for the Infrastructure, Environmental Protection and Services of the Bundeswehr, which was prominently featured on the evening news on Monday, Pistorius declared: “There must be agreement that higher defence spending is and remains necessary for the Bundeswehr to fulfil its mission.” And: “Training and exercise are again geared to the emergency... And this emergency is called war.”

Pistorius and Co. can scream for war as loud as they want. This does not change the fact that anti-militarism is deeply rooted, especially among workers in Germany after the crimes of the Nazis. On the contrary, the more openly the ruling class articulates its agenda and the more all the establishment parties—from the Left Party to the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD)—are closing ranks behind Israel’s genocide and criminalise any opposition to it, the more explosively resistance develops. The crucial task is to orient this towards the struggles of the international working class and to arm it with a socialist programme.



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