

# Berlin welcomes Syrian interim president and intensifies war and deportation campaign

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Had any further proof been needed that Germany's support for the US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran has nothing to do with a fight against terrorism or oppression, it was provided by the reception of Syria's transitional President Ahmed al-Sharaa in Berlin.

The German state leadership quite literally rolled out the red carpet for the Islamist leader and de facto dictator. In the morning, al-Sharaa was received by Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) at Bellevue Palace. He then took part in a German-Syrian economic forum at the Foreign Office before Chancellor Friedrich Merz welcomed him at the Chancellery with military honors and in a demonstratively cordial atmosphere.

If the label "Islamist terrorist" applies to any head of state in the Middle East, it applies to al-Sharaa. Under his former name, Mohammad al-Jolani, he was the emir of the al-Nusra Front, which was initially closely linked to the "Islamic State" and later directly to al-Qaeda. The United Nations designated the organization as terrorist as early as 2013.

That same year, al-Sharaa pledged allegiance in a video message to the then al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. Subsequently, al-Qaeda supported his militias in the Syrian civil war with fighters and weapons. The al-Nusra Front carried out numerous bloody attacks in which countless civilians were killed.

Since al-Sharaa and his militia—renamed Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)—rose to power in Damascus at the end of 2024 with the backing of the Western powers, violence against religious minorities and political opponents has continued unabated. The *World Socialist Web Site* has reported extensively on this. Thousands of Alawites, Druze and Christians have fallen victim to Islamist terror under al-Sharaa. His inaugural visit to Berlin, originally planned for January, was postponed

because he was at that time overseeing a military offensive against Kurdish forces. Nevertheless, the regime's violence is systematically downplayed or ignored in the Western media.

The reasons for this are obvious. The NATO powers view the new rulers in Syria as strategic allies—not only for controlling the country itself but as part of their broader offensive in the Middle East. As in the genocide against the Palestinians and the war against Iran, the aim is to subjugate the entire region to imperialist control, strengthen Israel as a central outpost, and prepare even wider wars against Russia and China.

German imperialism also sees the escalation as an opportunity to expand its own influence in the region. At the joint press conference with al-Sharaa, Merz proposed the establishment of an international contact group to coordinate measures for the "opening" of the Strait of Hormuz. Germany, he declared, was prepared "to help" and "to make its contribution to freedom of navigation."

This wording is deliberately misleading. In reality, it is not about "help" but about the military control of one of the world's most important trade routes. In other words, under the pretext of securing shipping, the German government is preparing the possible deployment of its own troops.

How far political support for the war has already gone was made clear by Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul after the G7 meeting at the end of last week. In an interview with ARD, he openly stated that Germany shares the US war aim of "containing and constraining" Iran. The illegal war of aggression, which has already claimed thousands of civilian lives—including more than 150 schoolgirls in the Iranian city of Minab—is thus explicitly legitimized.

Another reason for the silence about the crimes of the Syrian regime lies in the domestic agenda of the ruling class. The German government is preparing the mass deportation of Syrian refugees. Merz called for a “reliable return option” and announced that over the next three years around 80 percent of Syrians living in Germany are to be sent back to their country of origin. To this end, a joint “task force” is to be established, and a delegation trip to Damascus is already planned in the coming days.

This policy directly echoes the racist agitation of the AfD and demonstrates that the official policy of the German government is itself taking on increasingly reactionary and authoritarian forms.

Representatives of the Left Party and the Greens have voiced occasional criticism in response to the open collaboration with an Islamist regime. But this criticism is superficial and hypocritical. Both parties bear responsibility for the imperialist rape of Syria and the entire Middle East.

They politically and propagandistically supported the Islamist militias and celebrated the overthrow of the Assad regime as a “revolution.” The then Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Greens) personally traveled to Damascus to establish ties with the new rulers and court al-Sharaa.

They also fundamentally support the imperialist aggression in the current war against Iran. The chairman of the Left Party, Jan van Aken, openly welcomed the killing of the Iranian leadership, declaring that it was “good” that they were “gone” and should “rot in hell.” Such statements differ little in their cynicism and brutality from the war propaganda of the governments in Washington, Berlin or Tel Aviv.

The reception of al-Sharaa in Berlin makes clear what is really at stake: not democracy, human rights or the fight against terrorism, but power, influence and the barbaric enforcement of imperialist interests—abroad through war and at home through repression and deportation.



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