

German government launches multiple attack on basic rights

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The German government is implementing the most extensive rearmament programme since Hitler—all to be financed by massive cuts to social services. Shortly after the last federal election in February 2025, the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Greens agreed on an amendment to the country's constitution, the Basic Law, that allows for an additional €1 trillion [US\$1.2 trillion] in spending on defence and infrastructure. Germany's second parliamentary chamber, the Bundesrat, approved the package—with the votes of the Left Party—on March 21, 2025.

The government knows that this programme faces widespread opposition. That is why it is not only arming itself externally, but also internally. In addition to co-opting the far right Alternative for Germany (AfD), the main parliamentary parties are relying above all on the ruthless curtailment of democratic rights.

On April 21, 2026, Amnesty International presented its annual report on the global human rights situation in 2025-26. In this document, the organisation warns of an “aggravated global human rights crisis” because governments worldwide are acting in an increasingly authoritarian manner and systematically attacking human rights. Amnesty also criticised the German government, pointing, among other things, to restrictions on civil society work, surveillance, police violence against Palestine demonstrators, anti-Muslim racism and the suppression of critical voices in schools and universities.

In recent months, the German government has passed several laws that systematically restrict fundamental rights. This is not about the much-vaunted security, but about the suppression of opposition to war, rearmament and cuts to social services.

Military Service Act

The Military Service Modernisation Act has been in force since January 1, 2026. Although the government continues to speak of voluntary military service, men born in 2008 or later will in future be required to register for military service, complete a questionnaire and undergo compulsory medical examinations from mid-2027 onwards.

Experts already doubt that enough volunteers will be found. The Bundeswehr is set to be massively expanded by 2035; media reports cite targets of around 255,000 to 270,000 active-duty soldiers and 200,000 reservists.

In 2025, 3,131 minors aged 17 were recruited—around 30 percent more than in the previous year. The law was passed against the backdrop of the escalation of the war against Russia. As has happened twice before in the last century, young people are once again to serve as cannon fodder for the interests of German imperialism.

KRITIS Framework Act

The KRITIS Framework Act has been in force since March 17, 2026. It imposes comprehensive security, registration and reporting obligations on operators of critical infrastructure in sectors such as energy, water, health and transport. At the same time, the Act contains provisions requiring the government to reassess transparency obligations in the field of critical infrastructure.

In effect, this creates a framework for withholding security-related information from the public. More specific regulations for individual infrastructure sectors are to follow in the coming months thereby laying the groundwork for aligning key areas of society more closely with military and security interests.

Aviation Security Act

The amendment to the Aviation Security Act has also been in force since March 17, 2026. It will in future permit the deployment of the Bundeswehr within Germany for drone defence, particularly in connection with airports and critical infrastructure.

This measure creates a further gateway for the deployment of the armed forces within Germany. Such deployments were banned in Germany for many decades after WWII following the experience of Nazi repression. In addition, a new criminal offence has been introduced: anyone who intentionally enters security areas of airports with the aim of disrupting or endangering air traffic may in future be punished with up to five years' imprisonment. This tightening of the law is clearly also aimed at protest actions such as those carried out by the activist group "Last Generation."

Military Counter-Intelligence Service

The new MAD Act came into force on January 16, 2026. Largely without fanfare, the Bundestag thereby approved a significant expansion of the powers of the military intelligence service.

The Military Counter-Intelligence Service is now also permitted to operate outside military premises abroad—a task previously reserved primarily for the Federal Intelligence Service. Both services thus acquire parallel powers, without the law establishing a clear public demarcation of their responsibilities. Intelligence methods include, amongst other things, surveillance, observation and the use of informants.

The scope of permissible intelligence methods may in future be expanded through internal service regulations. This removes key powers from public debate and scrutiny. This is precisely the intent.

Berlin Freedom of Information Act

On 26 March 2026, the Berlin House of Representatives, with the votes of the CDU and SPD, passed a massive erosion of the Freedom of Information Act under an expedited procedure. Entire sectors—including energy, telecommunications, transport, health, water, media and culture—are broadly exempted from access to information.

Berlin's Data Protection Commissioner, Meike Kamp, criticised the fact that there is a risk of a move away from

transparency by public bodies in the area of freedom of information. Civil rights organisations and legal experts warn that linking the changes to an alleged threat situation serves primarily to shield the executive from public scrutiny.

Since the introduction of the Freedom of Information Acts, almost 300,000 requests have been made via the FragDenStaat platform. A large proportion of such requests are unlikely to be successful in future if Berlin's approach is adopted by other federal states.

Law implementing the EU Directive on combating terrorism

The law implementing the EU [European Union] Directive on combating terrorism has been in force since April 1, 2026. It expands the list of criminal offences and includes, amongst other things, possession of knives and motor vehicles in the context of terrorist offences.

This shifts the threshold for criminal liability far into the preparatory stage. Legal experts warn that this increasingly blurs the line between concrete planning of an offence and mere political attribution. Such regulations can be used against any organisation branded as "a threat to the state" or "extremist"—particularly against forces critical of capitalism and militarism.

These measures are only the beginning of even more far-reaching attacks on democratic rights. All of the main establishment parties have strengthened the AfD with their own right-wing policies and are simultaneously driving forward the establishment of a police and surveillance state. This demands that the working class take up the fight against capitalism, imperialist wars and the global assault on democratic rights as an independent political force with an international socialist perspective.



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