

What Did the Biggest Anti-terror Raid in German History Uncover?

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Some 36 hours after the largest raid in the history of Germany, there are increasing indications that the investigators apparently did not find the expected arsenal of weapons. The Attorney General has offered no explanation.

The massive raid continues to make waves, especially after more than 3 000 police officers searched more than 150 properties across Germany on Wednesday. At least 27 people were arrested and another 25 are being investigated. They are said to have planned an extensive armed coup.

But what have the investigators actually found in this unprecedented large-scale operation?

According to the Federal Criminal Police Office, weapons were found in 50 of the 150 locations searched. That sounds like an operation with a high risk potential, but conveys very little. In the past, baseball bats, Swiss army knives and brass knuckles were also considered "weapons" in comparable large-scale operations.

It is still not clear if the authorities have found machine guns, grenades or actual firearms. It would presumably take more than a handful of kitchen knives to launch a so-called planned military coup.

Attorney General is unusually unresponsive

Berlin weekly *Junge Freiheit* therefore sent the Federal Public Prosecutor a comprehensive catalog of questions about what items had been confiscated, how many firearms were among them and which of them were illegal. In view of the extent of the raid and the importance that Nancy Faeser's (SPD) interior ministry has attached to it, it can be ruled out that the authorities do not know this already.

However, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office refuses to respond to the JF request: A

spokesman asked “for your understanding that we are currently not commenting on the evidence found during the search measures – which have not yet been completed”.

It is apparently completely unclear why questions are raised in this regard or when the public will be informed. As a reminder, Faeser spoke of an “abyss of terrorist threat” from the rightwing.

These are strong words in a country where the RAF swept through Germany in the 1970s and where an Islamist with a truck killed twelve people and injured dozens more while driving into pedestrians at a Berlin Christmas market in 2016. It would be in Faeser’s interest to back up her peculiar comments with facts as soon as possible.

Service weapons found

According to German daily *Welt*, so far “a firearm”, stun guns, prepper supplies and thousands of euros in cash have been found. That sounds like a rather meager yield, especially since “thousands of euros” distributed over 150 houses searched certainly is no indication of the formation of a terrorist group. Notably, the Ministry of the Interior, in view of the risk of power cuts, has itself called for cash to be kept at home at all times.

The same applies to the supposed “prepper supplies”. The government has recommended that citizens prepare themselves extensively for emergencies due to risks associated with German support for the war in Ukraine.

It is therefore not clear where crisis prevention ends and supposed “prepping” starts. Since some of the suspects are said to have gun ownership cards, the discovery of stun guns is not surprising in the least. As a reminder, no parliament can be stormed with the latter.

The representatives of the Interior Committee in the Bundestag were said to have been informed a little more extensively on Friday. According to media reports, two rifles, a pistol and swords, stun guns and flare guns were confiscated. Even service weapons from accused police officers were taken. It is not yet known whether there were gun permits for the various weapons.

More and more media outlets have doubts

Meanwhile, doubts are growing in the media as to whether the historical raid was really appropriate. The editor-in-chief of *Cicero*, Alexander Marguier, wrote on Wednesday: “Today I spoke to a number of colleagues from other media – including those media that were at the forefront of the exuberant coverage of the treasonous plan. In unison (and of course only in confidence) it was said: It all seems completely exaggerated to us, but when the competition reacts so dramatically, we can’t take a tepid approach.”

The reporter Anna Schneider spoke on Twitter of an “extremely peculiar hysteria and staging of this spectacle”.

The former head of the parliamentary office of the *Bild* newspaper, Ralf Schuler, wrote on the social network that he could only hope that those responsible for the “giant raid” would also provide evidence of the alleged coup attempt.

The fact that numerous media had apparently been informed about the raids for some time can be considered proven in view of the fact that they arrived with camera teams on site at

the same moment as the police task forces.

‘Organized media support’

The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ) commented: “The historical large-scale operation and the accompanying media reporting raise questions.”

The author noted: “In political Berlin it has been heard for days that there is ‘a big thing in the bush’. Some media obviously knew about the impending raids and arrests, because many editorial offices published extensive reports on the breaking news, which was actually quite new, almost at the same time – as if after an embargo.”

She considered the “organized media support of the operations” to be fundamentally problematic. “It indicates that the matter wasn’t that dangerous after all. In the latter case, the impression could arise that this is primarily – or also – a political public relations exercise.”

A ‘show’

The domestic policy spokeswoman for the Left Party in the Bundestag, Martina Renner, criticized the handling of the Interior Ministry with the raid by 3000 police officers. The so-called “anti-terror operation” against 25 suspects around the 71-year-old Heinrich XIII living in Frankfurt am Main, Prince Reuss shouldn’t be a “show”, said the politician, who has been in the Bundestag since 2013.

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Featured image: Prepper gear for a coup? Photo credit Thomas Thompson

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