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Statement, 12.10.2010

Statement of Dr. Sabine Schiffer on the Termination of the Appellate Proceedings by the Nuremberg Attorney General's Office

Important Questions, Not Slander

On Ending the Criminalization of Scholarly Statements and the Possibility of Investigating the Events in Dresden

I would like to express both my relief and my gratitude – for the broad base of support that I found during the attempts of the Nuremberg-Fürth Office of Public Prosecutions to criminalize me. I have emerged moved and heartened from this ordeal, which has now ended thanks to the withdrawal of the appeal by the Nuremberg Attorney General's Office. The now final acquittal handed down by the Erlangen Municipal Court [Amtsgericht] on 03/24/2010 is an encouraging signal to all those who do their civic duty and articulate questions of public importance. I hope that this also encourages colleagues such as journalists Thomas Datt and Arndt Ginzel (in reference to the "Sachsensumpf" [Saxony Mess]), who did, and continue to do, their duty as members of the Fourth Power to act as a check on state institutions – and found themselves convicted of "slander" as a result.

Furthermore, I hope that I am acting in accordance with those who made donations in order to defray operating costs by using the funds that have now become available to further the work of the IMV – if not, please feel free to contact us. The legal dispute did indeed cost a great deal of time and energy, time and energy that were diverted from the IMV during that period.

It does, however, leave a bitter taste that the termination of the proceedings against me also serves to take the remaining open questions – which, to be sure, could have been brought up only at the margins of my trial – away from the public eye. Accordingly, I would like to list the most important issues once again below:

1. How did the perpetrator come into possession of the murder weapon, a Japanese combat knife?
2. What was found during the search of his residence and computer? With whom was he in contact? What websites did he visit?
3. Why was the hate-filled letter of the murderer not viewed as a threat to Marwa El-Sherbini prior to 7/1/2009? Was it classified as incitement, and, if so, was the author of the letter prosecuted for that?

4. Why did the letter not give reason to implement security measures that are otherwise standard during the trial, such as searches at the entrance or the presence of a member of the Judicial Police in the courtroom?
5. Why were no measures taken to protect the witness (El-Sherbini), who, it should additionally be noted, should not have had to appear in court at all?
6. Why did neither the court personnel present at the site, nor her attorney, attempt to protect her from the attack before she was stabbed more than a dozen times? Why did none of the fleeing lay judges, lawyers, and others take the victim's child out of the room?
7. Why did the Federal Police officer, who had been a witness in his capacity as a Border Patrol officer in a neighboring courtroom of the Dresden Superior Court [Landgericht], and was called to the scene by the fleeing members of the court, aim and fire at the leg of the (already severely wounded) victim's husband rather than at the murderer?

In my view, the aim of this list of open questions, which may indicate failures and errors in judgment, is not so much to expose those directly responsible as it is to raise public consciousness. It must be determined whether anyone was harmed due to stereotypical perceptions of groups, so that such tragic outcomes can be prevented in the future. With all respect for the suffering of Marwa El-Sherbini's family, who bear the burden of this perfidious murder, I must, as a non-lawyer and media researcher, raise the generally relevant issues.

As Report Mainz covered on 10/11/2010, anti-Islamic attitudes are drastically increasing; in some places, there is already a pogrom climate. I am not the only one who examines this issue scientifically and has received death threats as a result. Based on the new information gained in the current debates, the failure to investigate such threats over the last year, despite my filing a criminal complaint, should not be repeated. That is something of a relief, because, given the debates that fuel the fire of racism, scholarship, the media, and prudent politicians will have to commit even more than they have up to now to the encouragement of a constructive public debate instead of ceding ground to shallow, transparent populism. It must remain possible and a protected activity to counteract the latter tendency in accordance with the Constitution [Grundgesetz] and human rights law, which create duties both for the state and the citizenry.

In this vein, I thank all of you – let's keep at it!

Yours truly,

Dr. Sabine Schiffer
Head of the Institute

For additional information:

www.1001-idee.eu

www.solidaritaet-mit-dr-sabine-schiffer.de

<http://www.medienverantwortung.de/das-institut/der-prozess/>

<http://www.medienverantwortung.de/publikationen/interviews/>

www.youtube.com/SabineSchiffer

The relevant press releases from 07.03.2009 – 06.08.2010:

<http://www.medienverantwortung.de/publikationen/pressemitteilungen/>