[DE] State media authorities order blocking of Al-Manar TV due to dissemination of religious propaganda

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On 18 December 2024, the *Kommission für Jugendmedienschutz* (Commission for the Protection of Minors in the Media – KJM), acting on behalf of four state media authorities, i.e. *Landesanstalt für Medien Nordrhein-Westfalen* (North-Rhine Westphalia media authority – *LfM NRW), Bayerische Landeszentrale für neue Medien* (Bavarian new media authority – BLM), *Medienanstalt Berlin-Brandenburg* (Berlin-Brandenburg media authority – mabb) and *Medienanstalt Rheinland-Pfalz* (Rhineland-Palatinate media authority), ordered Germany's most powerful telecommunications companies to block the Hezbollah channel Al-Manar TV. The reason given by the KJM was the anti-Semitic and anti-democratic content distributed in particular via the channel's websites in the form of written articles, on-demand videos and a live stream, which was primarily considered to incite religious hatred against Israel. The telecommunications providers complied with the blocking order immediately.

The *Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat* (Federal Ministry of the Interior – BMI) had previously banned Al-Manar TV in 2008 on the basis of Article 3 of the German *Vereinsgesetz* (Law on Associations) for violating the concept of international understanding in the context of Islamist terrorism. Despite the ban, the service was still freely available online in Germany. As a result of the KJM's ruling and the measures subsequently taken by the telecommunications companies, this is no longer the case.

Pursuant to Article 4(1) of the *Jugendmedienschutz-Staatsvertrag* (State Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media – JMStV), certain types of content are totally unlawful in both broadcasting and telemedia. These include, among other things, propaganda material within the meaning of Article 86 of the German *Strafgesetzbuch* (Criminal Code), the content of which is directed against the constitutional order or the concept of international understanding. They also include content that uses the symbols of unconstitutional organisations within the meaning of Article 86a of the Criminal Code, incites hatred against certain sections of the population or a religious group, calls for violent or arbitrary measures against them or attacks their human dignity by insulting, maliciously maligning or defaming them. The KJM classified the content distributed via Al-Manar TV as totally unlawful. In particular, it had used symbols of unconstitutional organisations, denied Israel's right to exist and created images of an enemy, which clearly contradicted the concept of international understanding. Hatred,

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incitement and anti-democratic sentiments in the context of such radical Islamist content divided German society and should therefore be urgently prohibited. Under Article 109(3) of the *Medienstaatsvertrag* (State Media Treaty), the state media authorities are allowed to impose such urgent blocking orders in relation to telemedia services originating in Germany if measures against the organiser or provider prove to be unfeasible or unlikely to succeed.

Pressemitteilung der KJM

https://www.kjm-online.de/pressemitteilungen/vorgehen-al-manar/

Press release of the Commission for the Protection of Minors in the Media

https://www.kjm-online.de/pressemitteilungen/vorgehen-al-manar/

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