

## INACH Members Assembly 2020: Updates from jugendschutz.net



jugendschutz.net is continuously monitoring Social Media and websites for violations of German youth protection law. We recently re-launched the website of our department of political extremism [www.hass-im-netz.info](http://www.hass-im-netz.info), where we publish all our reports related to political extremism and online hate speech and are also planning to implement a blog function. You can find our English reports here: <https://www.hass-im-netz.info/publikationen/internationales>.

### Online extremism and hate speech in Germany

Right-wing extremist and Islamist groups are present on almost all social media platforms. They particularly address topics that are important to young people in order to attract them to their ideologies. Sports, gaming, sexuality, relationships, music: Every trend and every topic is being adapted and incorporated into their propaganda. For example, Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), particularly popular among youth, is used by extremist groups online to gain new followers. Combat sports are also used as a code to prepare for an anticipated “collaps of society” and ensuing street fights.

Gender stereotypes of right-wing extremist and Islamist ideologies are also propagated online: Men are portrayed as fearless fighters and warriors, while women are usually staged as promotional “decorations”. Own brands and events create the potential for identification, which is meant to attract young users.

Right-wing extremist online creates a basis to legitimise offline violence. Memes, videos, fake news and other forms of propaganda are used to evoke emotions. There is a hateful online community of right-wing extremists, which also included the Halle shooter who murdered two people in an attack on a synagogue and a kebab restaurant in October 2019. Right-wing extremist “fringe communities” are radicalised echo chambers that can be found mostly on platforms which can be used anonymously. But also alternative platforms, which don’t delete even drastic extremist content, are used as “safe havens”. On platforms like VK, messengers like Telegram and imageboards like 4Chan, extremists openly share manuals for armed combat, the building of weapons and explosives and insidious “highscores” of right-wing terrorists, or discuss possible target for terrorist attacks.

Openly jihadi propaganda has diminished in the German context compared to more subtle forms of propaganda. However, especially on Telegram there are still channels that glorify and propagandise terror attacks or call to join the militant jihad. In order to keep up the morale of their sympathisers in face of drastic losses of the so-called “Islamic State”, German jihadists post “motivational” videos from war zones in Syria. The show themselves heavily armed and in full battle armour. Sometimes, heavy artillery can be heard in the background. Those videos propagate the gender stereotype of a strong and fearless warrior and appeal to a sense of honour and duty of young men.

But there is also more subtle propaganda of Islamist group on German-language channels. Styled as “prisoner support” they call on their followers to pray for their “siblings in need” and ask for donations. The purpose is to keep imprisoned jihadists, their relatives and also IS sympathisers engaged in Islamist ideology, even after territorial losses. Imprisoned fighters are oftentimes style das „living martyrs“. This subtle propaganda is compelling to young people and evokes the image of a strong and sound community.