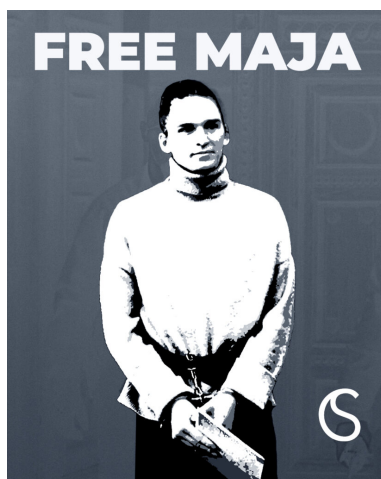

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/Germany-joins-Hungary-in-prosecuting-left-wing-activists>



Germany/Hungary

- IV Online magazine - 2026 - IVP613 - February 2026 -



Publication date: Saturday 7 February 2026

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The state's use of law courts and prison as a weapon against democratic protest is happening not just in Britain but across Europe. In Britain, protesters have been imprisoned under anti-terrorism law. In Germany, they are being imprisoned under a law which charges them with being members of a 'criminal organisation'. But what is most alarming in the German case is the way in which the German government is cooperating with the repressive Hungarian regime of Viktor Orbán in imprisoning German citizens who took part in an international anti-fascist protest in Budapest in 2023. This is known in Germany as the Budapest Komplex. [\[1\]](#)

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On 26 January 2026, in the Regional Court in Düsseldorf, six people were accused of having taken part in physical combat with Nazis in Budapest in February 2023 and causing bodily harm. The background to this is the fact that, on 12 February each year, thousands of Nazi sympathisers from across Europe march in Budapest to commemorate the escape of fascist troops from that city at the end of the second world war. The Hungarian government turns a blind eye but there are regular anti-fascist protests.

In the encounter of opposing sides in February 2023, a number of Nazis were injured. Orbán's right-wing government used the opportunity to strike a blow against the international anti-fascist movement. Local activists were arrested and imprisoned and international arrest warrants were issued for foreign activists from Germany, Italy, France and elsewhere.

The German authorities used these arrest warrants for their own agenda against the anti-fascist movement in Germany. Using Section 129 of the German Criminal Code (which defines a 'criminal organisation'), police began the search for the accused.

Maja arrested

This German-Hungarian cooperation led to the arrest, in Berlin in December 2023, of a non-binary woman from Jena (Maja [\[2\]](#)). The defence team fought for months to prevent her extradition to Hungary. Then on 27 June 2024, the Berlin court approved the extradition. The German Constitutional Court, the next day, 28 June 2024, ruled against the extradition, saying that insufficient checks had been made and that there was some doubt that 'the protection of the applicant, who identifies as non-binary, would be sufficiently guaranteed. This appears doubtful at the very least'. But the German authorities, the night before, anticipating the court ruling, had already sent Maja to Budapest.

The action against anti-fascists in Germany who participated in the Budapest protest continued and, on 6 May 2024, a Nürnberg activist (Hanna) was arrested and appeared before the court in Munich on 19 February 2025. The prosecution accused her of attempted murder and demanded an eight-year sentence. The evidence against he was

questionable – no evidence that she had even been in Budapest and reliance on the disputed recognition technology used by the Hungarian police. The charge of attempted murder was rejected but she was said to be a member of ‘a criminal organisation’, had ‘inflicted bodily harm’, and was sentenced to five years in prison.

By the start of 2025, six other activists had been arrested on charges relating to the Budapest protest and their trial started in Düsseldorf on 26 January this year. They are accused of belonging to a criminal organisation, causing bodily harm and of attempted murder in Budapest.

Harsh prison conditions for anti-fascist

Meanwhile, in Budapest, the extradited activist, Maja, has been kept in isolation in a damp, bedbug-infested cell, with inadequate shower facilities, is under constant video surveillance day and night, and is brought into court wearing chains. She had to be hospitalised after a 40-day hunger strike in 2025 but the German authorities refused to intervene. On 4 February 2026, the Budapest court sentenced her to eight years in prison.

There have been solidarity demonstrations in many German cities demanding the return of Maja and an end to her inhumane imprisonment. The Constitutional Court’s concerns about the treatment of Maja in a Hungarian prison is very real. This is a regime famous for its anti-LGBT measures. Gender-study courses at university were forced to close and gender change is officially prohibited.

Under Orbán’s premiership, Budapest has become an epicentre of the European Union’s shift to the far right. Since 2023, his regime has tried to use the EU’s internal extradition protocols to round up left-wingers in other countries of the EU who joined Hungary’s anti-fascist demonstration. Previous German governments had highlighted Hungary’s disrespect for human rights and the rule of law. However the present conservative government of Friedrich Merz was willing to extradite German citizens to be prosecuted by Orbán’s repressive regime. The European Arrest Warrant, introduced in 2004, is a classical extradition procedure. It was based on the claim that, in the EU, all citizens would have the same fundamental legal rights. But this is clearly not the case where Hungary is concerned. Germany’s willingness to join Hungary in prosecuting its own citizens, based on questionable evidence supplied by the Hungarian police, is a very serious development and is something the left across Europe needs to be aware of. We need to show our solidarity with those on trial in Düsseldorf and those already in prison in Germany and Hungary.

6 February 2026

Source: [Anti*Capitalist Resistance](#).

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[1] Photo: Maja, a non-binary anti-fascist imprisoned by Hungary.

[2] For more information on solidarity with Maja see: [Maja](#).