



## Democracy Works – The Way that the West Wants It to Work

We can see a discussion surrounding the shift in policy within Western states, specifically a rise in authoritarianism and the precedent being set by government reactions to citizens' protests of the Palestinian genocide. The fear is that this will give rise to a more authoritarian and less democratic rule in the future, giving governments the power to circumvent the rights that a democracy is supposed to afford its citizens. The Western governments may blame the usual suspects for this shift – migrants, the Russians and of course the Muslims. But a look into their political and legal systems shows us that this response is not unprecedented. The policies that they are enacting aren't new – they are part of the method used by western states when they need to further their agendas, and protect their interests against any threat, internal or external – current, perceived or future.

Right now, governments across the western world can see their system is struggling to cope with the problems they are facing, and they can see their citizens questioning not just governmental policies, but also the systems they are based on. They are enacting policies to prevent the pressure and activism for change that threatens and undermines the interests of key groups in society. Fearing that if they do not get the situation 'under control', it could potentially lead to a power vacuum that could lead to a power changing hands, and it could even go as far as a demand for a complete change to ideology.

So, we see a push to protect their values and interests – even when it means going against the values they claim to uphold, such as 'human rights', and the international law they claim is necessary for peace. Their blatant support for Zionism and the Jewish entity's genocide has exposed how their desire to protect the interests of the ruling elite, supersedes everything else.

Their move to a more authoritarian rule commences through government decisions to curb citizens' rights, and by enacting laws that allow states to reverse the citizenship of those who do not abide by their laws or values. In the USA, Trump promised mass deportations of migrants under the guise of protecting national security. In Germany, they have made sure that those who wish to receive citizenship affirm the Jewish entity's right to exist. And these are only two examples of many.

But these decisions aren't indictive of a new stance, even though we may think that. Western governments have a history of quashing the freedoms of citizens who express ideas that go against the status quo or the narratives that they wish to feed their populations – even when those citizens are operating within the rights that democracy has afforded them. There are numerous examples of this. In America, both Abraham Lincoln and FDR suspended key civil liberties during wartime crises. Lincoln targeted habeas corpus (legal safeguard against unlawful detention) amid the Civil War rebellion, while FDR authorized mass ethnic-based detentions in World War II.

In the case of Germany, the allowance to circumvent democratic principles was added to their post war constitution. At that time, they faced a dilemma – The Nazi party had risen legally in Germany, and they needed to stop something like that from happening again. So, in their postwar constitution, which was approved over by the Allies– the USA, UK and France- it established militant democracy as a core principle to prevent repeats of the Weimar Republic's collapse. This featured provisions like Articles

18 and 21, allowing bans on parties or individuals threatening the "free democratic basic order." They circumvented the rights of people to have a party that represented their ideas – if those ideas went against the status quo. This allowed them to take action against the Socialist Reich Party (SRP) and Communist Party of Germany (KPD). Later it allowed them to stop the resurgence of far-right parties like the National Democratic Party, and today's rise of the Alternative for Germany, a populist party capitalizing on fears related to immigration and economic uncertainty.

Granting the state the power to suppress parties, ideas, or movements deemed "dangerous," creates a slippery slope: those powers can easily be abused, either by targeting legitimate opposition or by consolidating authority in ways that erode democratic norms. In essence, it allows a democracy to become authoritarian in the name of self preservation. And this authoritarianism can, and does, affect other aspects of their policy. In the case of Germany this authoritarian element has been legitimized using the term militant democracy. This term is indicative of a very real understanding of how states operate to protect themselves. And while the term 'militant democracy' may not apply to all western countries, there is a general acceptance that Western States will enact laws and policies that circumvent democratic principles in order to protect their 'law and order' or 'national security'. This is where we get terms like 'extremist', 'terrorist' and 'national security' come in – they are vague and far reaching enough that they can be used to justify actions against anything that the states deems a threat – with no accountability.

We need to remember that states will pursue self preservation, even if it is at the expense of their democratic values and ideas. This is something that was easier to hide when they were flourishing; either because people didn't look too closely at their countries political and legal systems, or because the states didn't feel the need to be as blatant in the steps they took to quash any naysayers.

And yet despite this very real reality we have been told to trust the law in countries like Germany – to trust that if we are citizens, it will protect us and provide us with our rights. But these rights are contingent upon us accepting the policy decisions that they make at the time. And this is deeply embedded – so a single politician or party cannot change them.

So, we should worry when we hear about the German efforts to deradicalize extremists and terrorists. Not because extremists and terrorists exist but because of who they deem to fit into those terms. Their efforts started back in the 1980s and at the time, was focused on targeting left- wing terrorists. Since then, they have extended their funding to the widespread deradicalisation initiatives; evolving from early efforts against left-wing and right-wing extremism to comprehensive programs targeting Islamist radicalization post-9/11.

We should also be worried when Boris Pistorius from the Social Democrats told the German Press Agency (DPA) that the exemption for men to travel freely and without permission is only applicable in peacetime, or so long as military service remains voluntary. And that from July 2027, all 18-year-old-men will have to take a medical exam to assess their fitness for possible military service.

As Muslims, these laws and initiatives should make us think. What do such decisions mean for our future in the Western countries? Or in our dealings with them?

When we can see very real examples of how they ignore their democratic values when it suits them and being a citizen is not a guarantee of safety. They are creating a situation where we are faced with a very real choice – support them and compromise on our beliefs, or be deemed an enemy.

We may think that this is just a result of specific leaders. That once Donald Trump, Netanyahu or Chancellor Friedrich Merz finish their term in office, things will change. But that is not the case. These policies are emerging from the very foundation of their system. And we must be aware of this. Because the future will not improve – it'll only get worse.

Recently, in the UK, we have seen an example of how the state targeted the Palestine Action activists – even going so far as to place reporting restrictions concerning the specific details of the Palestine Action activists' retrial. This trial came after their acquittal in February 2026. A conviction could lead to terrorism sentences unknown to the jury, with bans on mentioning the proscription or genocide motive. This was possible because of the way that their legal system works - the Supreme Court interprets the law (including the Human Rights Act), but Parliament can pass new statutes that override or trim the effects of those rulings.

The mechanisms in Germany are different, and people may cite the eternity clause in their argument to say that Germany doesn't violate democratic values and rights. But that clause doesn't stop them contracting the rights that they offer individuals. And UN experts and human-rights NGOs have repeatedly warned that non-violent protest and speech in solidarity with Palestine (as an example) are being treated as security threats, with activists facing lawsuits, bans on slogans, and even surveillance-linked pressure.

So, as Muslims we must ask ourselves – can we really trust them? We may continue telling ourselves that their legal system works and at the very least we will have our right to 'fight' in court. But we can see that that fight can only go so far. And that when the states wish, they have a very real legal basis to take that right away,

So, we must be aware and we must see the signs – the signs that show us that anyone who questions the injustice and hypocrisy in their system is becoming a threat. And we must recognize their awareness of the alternative that Islam provides for all people. An awareness that makes Muslims everywhere a threat and an enemy of the system as the West tries to halt its decline.

We must also realise that we are moving towards a reality where we will be faced with a choice – become an enemy of the Western States or give up Islam, and any attachment we have to our Deen, becoming a 'Muslim' in identity and nothing more. So the question is, how far are we willing to compromise in order to continue to live within their capitalist system? Because they have already set the stage to ensure that they don't have to compromise to allow us to live with them.

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