

# Austria: Prosecutors Charged 17 Members of the Right Wing Generation Identity Group

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Austria: Prosecutors indicted 10 leaders of the anti-immigration Generation Identity activist group, and seven sympathizers, who are being charged with incitement to hatred, forming a criminal organization, property damage and harassment. Generation Identity's media stunts have been entirely peaceful. Martin Sellner, leader of Generation Identity, was deported from the UK in March with his American girlfriend, Brittany Pettibone, for attempting to give a speech. Austrian law is based on precedent, and Sellner says that the Generation Identity case is being used to set a precedent for 'criminal association', which is a way to criminalize being a member of any organization the government does not like. He says the law will be used to intimidate and prosecute members and supporters of the populist Austrian Freedom Party that recently gained power in the latest election.

Austrian prosecutors announced criminal charges Monday against 17 members of the far-right "Identitarian Movement" (IBÖ) connected to several of the group's activities in recent years.

The state prosecutor in the city of Graz said 10 prominent members of the group and seven other "active sympathisers" were being charged with various counts of hate speech, criminal association, damage to property and coercion.

The charges follow raids last month at the houses of several members of the group, including one of its leaders Martin Sellner.

The group has staged several stunts in recent years to publicise what prosecutors called its "xenophobic ideology".

One such event cited by prosecutors was an incident in March 2017 where members gained access to the roof of the Turkish embassy and hung a banner from it bearing the slogan:

“Erdogan, take your Turks back home”.

Another example from June 2016 is mentioned in which members stormed the stage during a talk on refugee policy at Klagenfurt University and unrolled banners reading “Stop Immigration” and “Integration is a lie”.

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