

Germany bans Turkish nationalist gang accused of having links with AKP

by The Region - 11/07/2018 15:58



The German Interior Ministry has banned the biker group Osmanen Germania, a gang accused of having links with the Turkish government. After discovering its formation, one head of a state parliament group for the Free Democrat Party, Hans Ulrich Rulke, said that Osmanen Germania is Erdogan's "paramilitary support unit in Germany to achieve his political goals."

Osmanen Germania, believed to have at least 300 members by the German police (although the group claims to have thousands), has been raided in the German states of Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden Wurttemberg, Bavaria and Hesse. 16 club chapters will be banned as part of a broader crackdown on organised crime.

Eight members of Osmanen Germania were on trial, accused of attempted murder, extortion, drug trafficking, deprivation of liberty, and forced prostitution. The group regularly attacks Turkey's opponents, including Kurdish activists and members of the

Turkish left residing in Germany.

"Those who flout the rule of law shouldn't expect any leniency from us," the Interior Ministry wrote in a statement.

In late 2017, the daily Stuttgarter Nachrichten and the public broadcaster ZDF revealed that the group was being funded by Metin Kulunk, a close confidant of Erdogan and member of the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

The investigation which was based on phone taps conducted by the German police revealed the relationship between the gang, Kulunk, the AKP's European lobby (Union of European Turkish Democrats) and Turkey's MIT intelligence agency.

Apparently, Kulunk asked the former head of UETD to seek permission for Osmanen Germania to beat up German comedian Jan Bohmermann after he wrote a satirical poem criticizing Erdogan, according to DW. Bohmermann had to receive police protection and spend weeks outside of Germany.

In another case, the former head of UETD, Yilmaz Ilkay Arin, told Osmanen Germania to arm themselves. After receiving this advice, Mehmet Bagci -- the liaison between the AKP and the Gang -- ordered 10 handguns from Serbia. In June 2016, Hamburg police personally saw Kulunk, Erdogan's close confidant, hand the group a bag full of money.

Kulunk responded to the allegations, which included taped conversations, as an operation conducted by Germany's deep state in collaboration with the PKK and FETO.

According to the BBC, in the aftermath of the failed coup attempt in 2016, Osmanen Germania members were invited to Ankara by Ilnur Cevik, a senior figure in the AKP, who wore the clubs t-shirt and took a picture with them. Cevik told German media that he did so to support their "youth work".