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Operation Luxor

Leading ÖVP politicians to be questioned about Operation Luxor raids in parliamentary investigative committee

- The [ÖVP corruption investigation committee](#) is investigating the years 2017-2021 under the government of disgraced ex-Chancellor Sebastian Kurz
- The ÖVP corruption investigation committee began its work in December 2021. There have been 27 meetings so far. 50 respondents were questioned over 24 survey days.
- Most recently, the committee of inquiry questioned former ministers Margarete Schramböck and Elisabeth Köstinger and President of the National Council Wolfgang Sobotka, who [remained very secretive on questions](#) pertaining to the Operation Luxor raids.

Sobotka, who was Austria's Interior Minister in 2017, claimed to not know who the academic Lorenzo Vidino is, despite his work being central to security measures taken against Muslims by the Austrian government. Regarding the Muslim Brotherhood he refused to openly respond, arguing that the organisation in question operates underground.

- As part of their 2017 election programme, the ÖVP co-funded a study through the ÖIF (Austrian Integration Fund) which is under the umbrella of the interior ministry, on the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists, which was conducted by Lorenzo Vidino to the cost of 80,000€.
- Now the opposition also wants to add the [controversial "Operation Luxor" raids](#) and the ousted ["experts" Nina Scholz and Heiko Heinisch](#) to the agenda of the ÖVP corruption investigation committee.

The ministries of Justice and Home Affairs are to provide files on this. SPÖ (Social Democratic Party of Austria), FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria) and Neos want to clarify possible political influence on the investigative work.

- After the summer break on September 6th, the questioning in the parliamentary inquiry committee on the alleged corruption of the ÖVP continues. Amongst others,



former Chancellor Sebastian Kurz and Integration Minister Susanne Raab (responsible for the Islam Map) are to be questioned.

Investigations against foundation and three of its board members are closed

- The investigation against the [charitable foundation Anas Schakfeh](#) in connection with Operation Luxor has been dropped, the public prosecutor's office in Graz confirmed on Monday.
- A house search took place at the private foundation in November 2020 in the course of the Operation Luxor raids, which the higher regional court classified as illegal a year ago, the association announced in a broadcast.
- Like many other associations, the foundation had been screened by investigators for possible contacts with the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, as well as suspicions of terrorist financing and the formation of a terrorist organisation.

There were numerous house searches and investigations against around 70 people in the states of Styria, Carinthia, Lower Austria and Vienna.

- In the summer of 2021 the raids were declared to have been [partly unlawful](#), after the Graz Higher Regional Court upheld several complaints against the measure.
- In September 2021, the foundation applied for the preliminary investigation to be dropped. In June 2022, the experts appointed by the public prosecutor's office [were declared biased](#). Now [the prosecution has stopped the investigation](#) against the private foundation and three members of the board.

Operation Luxor survivors win a defamation case against key witness

- In a [July 2021 interview](#) with Amir Zaidan on the online medium *exxpress.at*, one of the key witnesses of the Graz prosecution authority named suspects and made various allegations.

In the conversation, which is no longer available on the *exxpress* website, Zaidan alleged that the political scientist Farid Hafez and another individual were Muslim Brotherhood members, and that the organisation was "Islamist" and militant.

- The Muslim Youth Austria (MJÖ), was described by Zaidan as a cadre force for the Muslim Brotherhood, while the MJÖ successfully took legal action against it.



- Hafez and the other individual brought [a lawsuit against Zaidan for defamation](#), which Judge Stefan Romstorfer decided on in a trial lasting several days.

The judge convicted Amir Zaidan of a fine totalling 3,500€ ; 25€ a day for 140 days. Half of the conviction is conditionally suspended for two years. For Romstorfer, the incriminated quotes were presented as statements of fact rather than a personal evaluation, he explained.