# Islam-ist

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# Tränen der Dawa

## Online prevention of radicalisation

## Violence Prevention Network

Violence Prevention Network is a group of experienced specialists who have been active in the field of prevention of extremism and deradicalisation of extremist-motivated violent offenders with great success for many years. Since 2001, the Violence Prevention Network team has been working successfully in reducing ideologically and religiously motivated serious crime and extreme acts of violence committed by adolescents and young adults.

> *"Only dialogue – a real, face-to-face conversation – has the power to sow doubt in extremists. The interplay of facial expressions, gestures, empathy and patience creates a sufficient level of trust to facilitate deradicalisation work. If young people at risk of radicalisation spend more time online nowadays, then that is where we will meet them."*
>
> *Thomas Mücke, Managing Director of Violence Prevention Network*

## Contact

Violence Prevention Network

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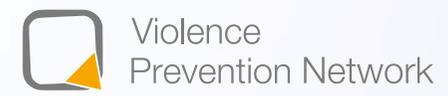The Islam-ist | Tränen der Dawa project is funded by the Berlin State Commission against Violence.

## Deradicalisation: from online contact to offline dialogue

Selective consumption of information and the individualised selection of content in the new media puts young people at risk of one-sided exposure: they fail to comprehend the wide diversity of existing views and approaches adequately. As a result, incipient radicalisation processes can stabilise or escalate, and vulnerable individuals may progressively isolate themselves in the radicalised scene. Such processes of isolation increase the hostile distance to governmental and social institutions, thus impeding the primary motivation for reintegration. Practical experiences have shown that although the internet plays a considerable role in radicalisation processes, deradicalisation usually does not work without offline contact with other people.

Using our two project platforms in combination with social-media channels (e.g. Facebook or Youtube), we select, edit and distribute content directed specifically at our target groups in order to attract their attention and encourage them to engage in online communication with our consultants. Once a person has sought contact with us via online chat, e-mail or phone call, this established online communication ideally continues on a regular basis and, ultimately, develops into an offline dialogue that can initiate the process of deradicalisation, provided that our consultants deem this necessary.

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**Landeskommission
Berlin gegen Gewalt**

**Violence
Prevention Network**

## Islam-ist | Tränen der Dawa (Tears of the dawah)

In early 2015, the website *www.traenen-der-dawa.de* (Tears of the dawah), funded by the Hessian Ministry of the Interior, went online. It portrays the radicalisation of two Muslim friends. Multimedial narrative elements tell users about the decisions these young men make on their quest for a religious identity and the consequences of their decisions on themselves and their families.

In late 2016, the online service was expanded with the addition of *www.islam-ist.de*. This second component of the online campaign for the prevention of radicalisation is an information portal about the topic of Islam, funded by the Berlin State Commission against Violence. Designed as an FAQ platform, the website engages with fundamental questions about the everyday lives of Muslim teenagers and adults. It further offers a glossary containing different interpretations of basic religious concepts and terms that are important in Islam. A comprehensive video archive complements the FAQ and glossary sections. The continuously expanding online portal also takes socio-political issues into account.

The two interconnected websites constitute a straightforward platform offering dialogue to our target group, including the option of transferring this dialogue to an offline context at a later stage. Interested readers can also contact our team over the phone, per e-mail, via Facebook or on WhatsApp.

## The objective of Islam-ist | Tränen der Dawa

The project aims to prevent the developing radicalisation of the target group in an online context or, if the process of radicalisation has already begun, establish face-to-face communication offline in order to facilitate the reintegration process.

## Target groups of Islam-ist | Tränen der Dawa

The primary target groups are Muslim teenagers and young adults who are still in the initial stages of the radicalisation process and do not yet reject offers of communication with third parties. They often turn to the internet to find answers to their questions, which arise from the interaction of religion and society in their everyday lives.

The project is further aimed at Muslim teenagers and young adults who have already been radicalised but wish to quit the scene now and at those who sympathise with Islamist ideologies and/or scenes.

It also intends to support pedagogues and the concerned communities of radicalised persons or those at risk of radicalisation. Both groups have access to a wide range of information on the online portal, which also offers a way of contacting employees of Violence Prevention Network.

## Online prevention of radicalisation

Teenagers tend to turn to the internet and social media as their main platforms for exchange, research and information. This is why extremist groups and organisations use the internet with increasing intensity to mobilise supporters and distribute their content on a global scale. Young people looking for religious or political information have particular difficulties distinguishing between serious educational offers and deliberate extremist propaganda.

Our online portals offer young Muslims and those interested in Islam an opportunity to engage with questions about their religion and everyday lives online without being exposed to extremist interpretations. The selection and multimedial presentation of our content is aimed specifically at our target group and constitutes a counterweight to extremist content. It encourages exchange and dialogue and promotes the development of a trusting relationship.

The answers on the website are more than just a selection of different perspectives on controversial terms and interpretations within Islam. They are also intended to give the target group insights into multi-religious, secular or liberal approaches to certain questions.