

Press Release

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**Higher Regional Court Frankfurt/Main: beginning of the main trial against
Taha Al-J.**

Today, the 5th Senate (State Security Senate [Staatsschutzsenat]) of the Higher Regional Court (OLG) Frankfurt/Main has started its main trial against the 27-year-old Taha Al-J. for charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes against persons, murder and trafficking of human beings in connection with membership in a foreign terrorist organisation („Islamic State“, IS).

Five judges of the Senate, the defendant, his two defence lawyers, two representatives of the General State Attorney and two lawyers of the joint plaintiff took part in the trial session.

Following the formal finding of the presence of the defendant, the defendant was interrogated regarding his personal situation. Thereupon, the representatives of the General State Attorney read out the summary part of the bill of indictment dating from 5 February 2020. The defendant is accused of having participated as a member of the IS in the time period from 2013 until 2019 in Syria, Iraq and Turkey. In this context he is, moreover, charged with genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and trafficking of hu-

man beings for the exploitation of their manpower, all crimes conducted to the detriment of the religious minority of the Yazidi. Furthermore, the defendant is charged with the murder of a 5-year-old Yezidi girl.

The bill of indictment includes the following charges: in March 2013 the latest Taha Al-J. integrated himself in his home country Iraq in the structures of the IS and was, from this time onwards, member of this organisation and, since the beginning of 2015 the latest, the chief of the bureau for „Sharia exorcism“ in Rakka/Syria. In this function, he repeatedly made visits to a women’s house called „Bait Al Muhajerat“ and held sessions with the women. In September 2015, he entered Turkey and performed responsibilities in connection with the sheltering of women. Finally, the defendant declared that he was prepared to construct explosive devices of all different kinds for the IS and to instruct a member of the IS in his house in Turkey regarding the use of explosives.

Furthermore, the defendant is charged with the acquisition of a Yazidi woman and her 5-year-old daughter as slaves at the end of May or beginning of June 2015. Together with other Yazidi women and children, they were offered for purchase at the IS base in Syria, and previously had been taken as prisoners in the Region Sindjar close to the city of Kocho in the north of Iraq at the beginning of August 2014. They had been sold and resold several times as slaves by members of the IS afterwards.

Taha Al-J. intended, according to the charges, to exterminate the religious minority of the Yezidi by his acquisition of the two Yezidi females and to have personal benefits from their services in his household.

The defendant is charged of having brought the two Yezidi to his household in Fallujah at the end of June or beginning of July 2015, where he lived with Jennifer W., who is separately prosecuted. Mother and daughter were held as prisoners until September 2015 the latest. According to the charges, they were forced to keep house and to live according to strict Islamic rules. They received insufficient nutrition and were beaten repeatedly as a „punishment“.

Between the end of July and September 2015, there was a further measure of punishment, according to the charges. Taha Al-J. went aggressive and forced the mother to leave the house barefooted for half an hour at a temperature of 50 degrees Celsius,

which led to injuries of the mother's feet. He, then, allegedly chained the girl at a window in open sun, as a consequence of which the weakened girl died.

After the reading of the bill of indictment, the presiding judge of the Senate instructed the defendant about his right to silence. The defendant did not provide details to personal and substantive matters.

The presiding judge adjourned the main trial. It will be continued on 27 April 2020 at 10.00 am. It is intended to interrogate a police officer as a witness on that day.

Taha Al-J. is still in pre-trial detention.

The main trial will be continued on the following dates: 27 April, 29 April., 5 May, 7 May, 11 May, 19 May, 29 May, 9 June, 15 June, 19 June, 22 June, 23 June, 24 June, 29 June, 3 July, 27 July, 6 August., 11 August, 14 August, 18 August, 20 August und 28 August 2020, at 10.00 am respectively.

The trial sessions will be held in room 165 of the court building C, Konrad-Adenauer-Straße 20, 60313 Frankfurt/Main.

Higher Regional Frankfurt/Main, 5-3 StE 1/20 - 4 - 1/20

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