



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on May 10, 2011

Merkel Could Face Prison for Cheering “Criminal” bin Laden Hit

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is the subject of a criminal complaint after commenting publicly that she was “glad” Osama bin Laden had been killed, with the judge who filed the charge accusing her of violating Germany’s law against rewarding or approving of crimes — in this case, homicide. If convicted, she could face up to three years in prison.



“I am glad that it was successful, the killing of bin Laden,” Merkel [told](#) reporters the morning after President Obama made the original announcement about the assassination. The remark immediately sparked an uproar in Germany, where polls [show](#) the public was largely opposed to the extrajudicial murder of an unarmed man.

Politicians, even some within her own Christian Democrat party, immediately rushed to condemn the comments. “These are revenge fantasies one shouldn’t indulge in. That’s the Middle Ages,” prominent Christian Democrat parliamentarian Siegfried Kauder was [quoted](#) by the *Christian Science Monitor* as saying. He [reportedly](#) expressed doubts about the legality of the [supposed](#) killing as well.

Media talking heads and columnists in Germany debated Merkel’s comment endlessly, too. News reports [said](#) the outcry about her remark almost overshadowed the assassination of bin Laden itself. And now, it’s becoming even more serious: The judicial system is getting involved.

Last week, German judge Heinz Uthmann filed a criminal complaint [alleging](#) that Merkel violated Article 140 of the criminal code prohibiting open support of serious crimes. “For the daughter of a Christian pastor, the comment is astonishing and at odds with the values of human dignity, charity and the rule of law,” the judge [told](#) the newspaper *Hamburger Morgenpost*.

Calling Merkel’s comments “tacky and undignified,” Uthmann accused her of criminally endorsing homicide. “I am a law-abiding citizen and as a judge, sworn to justice and law,” the judge told the German daily. Merkel could serve up to three years in a German jail or be forced to pay a hefty fine if found guilty.

The judge isn’t the only one to claim the assassination was illegal. Former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, for example, [asserted](#) about the bin Laden killing: “It was clearly a violation of applicable international law.” Some prominent German critics also argued that bin Laden had never been proven guilty of any crime in a court of law, while others highlighted the fact that he was unarmed — an important point [revealed](#) several days after Obama originally claimed there had been a fire fight.

So far Merkel has refused to retract her statement, but a government spokesperson issued a sort of “clarification” after the furor erupted. “The reason for her happiness was the thought that this man



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would no longer pose any danger,” he said, saying the Chancellor’s statement had been quoted out of context. In subsequent interviews, however, Merkel did tone down her rhetoric, [using](#) words such as “relieved” instead.

But while some Americans [celebrated](#) in the streets upon hearing Obama’s announcement, polls [cited](#) by the *Spiegel Online* indicate that Germans were far less enthusiastic about what many perceived to be an [illegal assassination](#). Almost 65 percent of the population said bin Laden’s death was “no reason to rejoice.” Members of Merkel’s party and the parliamentary alliance were not much happier.

In the U.S., however, a host of neoconservative commentators have [blasted](#) the charges against Merkel. The overall lack of jubilation among Germans at the officially announced death of bin Laden has also attracted [scrutiny](#) among those pundits, some of whom labeled it anti-American.

But raising [questions](#) about the assassination and, if true, its appropriateness, is hardly a “left wing” or America-hating phenomenon. A very serious question [raised](#) by *The New American* and [others](#) — why would U.S. forces kill a man supposedly of such intelligence, particularly when he was unarmed as subsequent versions of the official narrative revealed — still has not been addressed.

It is unclear whether Merkel will actually have to appear in court to face the charges. The two-page complaint filed by the judge will be sent to prosecutors who will decide whether or not to pursue the case.

The judge himself is not optimistic, [saying](#) he did not believe prosecutors would have the courage to bring the case. But, he added, he wanted to at least express his “shock and outrage” at Merkel’s behavior by filing the criminal complaint. The ball is now in the prosecutors’ court.



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