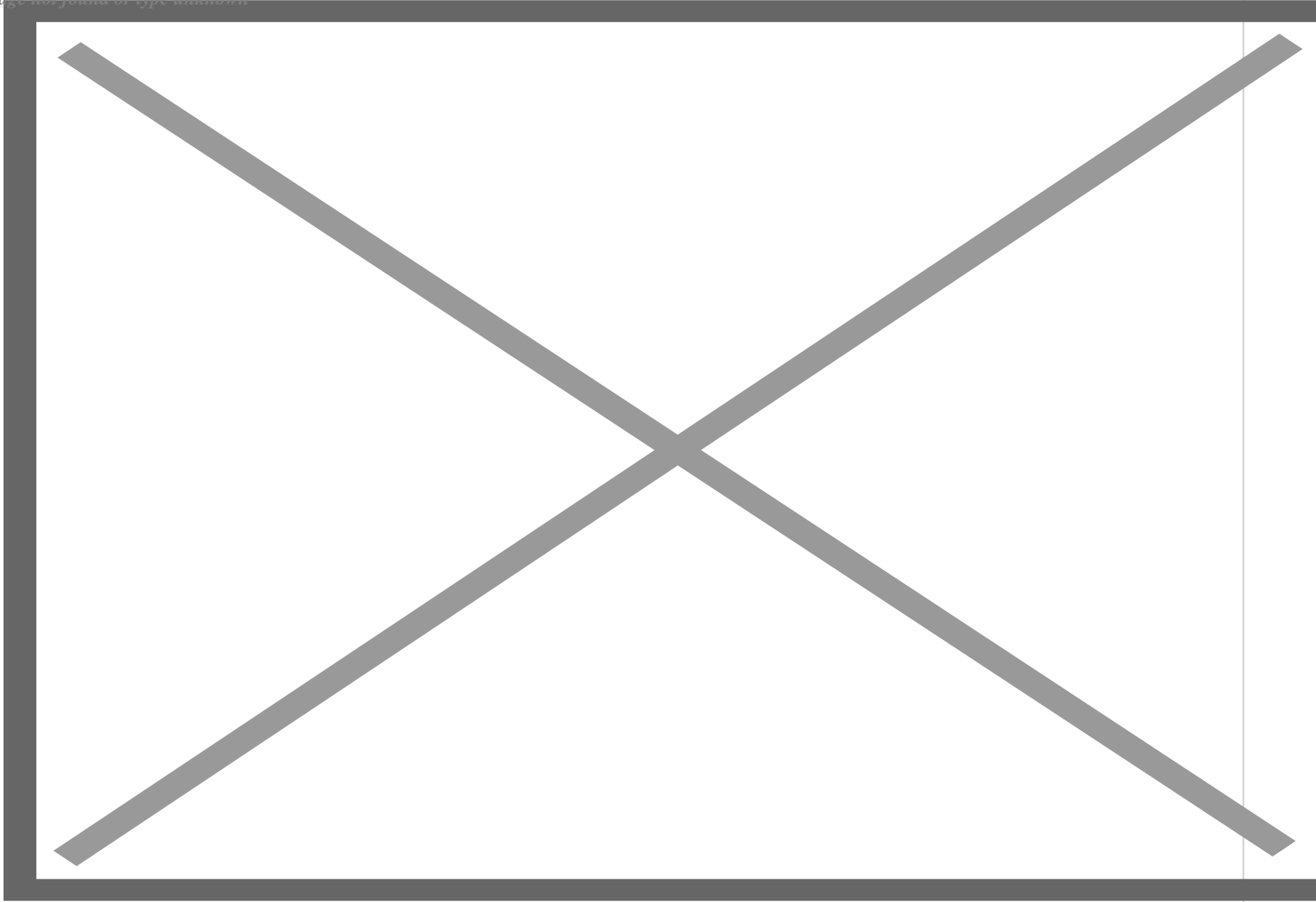


German police conduct raids to investigate climate activists

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Authorities say raids took place in seven states to investigate seven people aged between 22 to 38 over suspicions of forming a criminal organisation.

Berlin, May 26 (RHC)-- Police in Germany have carried out raids across seven states targeting activists of the climate advocacy group Letzte Generation (Last Generation), which recently led street blockades involving protesters glueing themselves to the asphalt.

According to a joint statement by Bavaria's police and prosecutors, the raids were aimed at investigating seven people aged between 22 to 38, over suspicions of supporting or attempting to create a criminal organisation.

"The suspects are accused of organising a fundraising campaign to finance the criminal acts committed by 'Last Generation', propagating these acts on their website, and collecting a sum of at least 1.4 million euros (\$1.5 million) in donations," the police said.

Two suspects are also suspected of having tried to sabotage the Trieste-Ingolstadt oil pipeline in the southeastern state of Bavaria in April 2022. "The aim of the searches is to find evidence of the membership structure of Last Generation, to further clarify their financing and to confiscate assets," the authorities said.

Environmentalists say Germany's climate policy has taken a back seat as Europe grapples with an energy crisis, driven in part by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In March, an economic research company said climate change could cost Germany up to 900 billion euros (\$970 billion) in cumulative economic damage by 2050.

Dozens of climate activists from the group have found themselves before the courts in recent weeks over their traffic blockade actions. Over the past year, they have also targeted various artworks and exhibits.

The controversial tactics of Letzte Generation, from hunger strikes to throwing mashed potato on paintings in museums, have resulted in the group being described by some German politicians as "climate terrorists".

The group in a Twitter post said: "Nationwide raid. #completelynutty." "Searches of lobby structures and seizures of government's fossil money – When?"

While Last Generation has acknowledged its protests are provocative, it argues that by stirring friction it can encourage debate within society about climate change. The group's activists have accused the German government of not taking serious measures to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius while instead further investing in fossil fuel infrastructure.

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