

**Media Bus Amsterdam**  
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**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**  
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**G8: Severe infringement of press freedom – mobile media bus confiscated by police**

On 6 June 2007 at 7.30 pm, around 100 German riot police encircle the 'Amsterdam Media Bus', organised by the network *Dissent* from the Netherlands. At the time, the Media Bus is standing in the August-Bebel-Straße in Bad Doberan, near Heiligendamm, next to the *Info-point Bad Doberan*, one of several independent information centres set up by activists that provides coffee, food, medical care and up-to-date information about the protests.

The Media Bus provides a free editing space and safe storage for laptops and cameras for freelance journalists and media activists and is used by around 20 journalists from all over Europe and the U.S. At the time of the raid, most of the journalists are at the mass blockades at the main entry roads to the security zone around Heiligendamm. Seven laptops are standing on the tables in the bus, some of them in stand-by mode, as journalists use the space to upload their edited photos and texts onto the internet and private servers through a wireless network connection.

Shortly after the police starts surrounding the bus, around 30 activists from a samba band draw attention to what is happening by shouting "this is what democracy looks like". After some scuffling with police they are kept at bay whilst around six riot police search the bus and detain a journalist inside the bus as well as the bus driver. Hans C. from the *Centre des Medias Alternatives de Bruxelles* ([www.CeMAB.be](http://www.CeMAB.be)) later says "I had the impression that the police officers were very tense. I was afraid they would beat me if I would show only even slight resistance".

The Dutch driver of the Media Bus is forced by the police to drive the bus onto the terrain of the specially built 'prisoner collection point' (*Gefangensammelstelle*) in the Industriestraße in Rostock, several kilometres away. Meanwhile, the officer in command announces the reason for the action: police suspect the bus to host an illegal radio station. Further, the German authorities do not accept the Dutch safety certification (APK) of the bus (TÜV in Germany, MOT in the UK), which is also the official reason given for its confiscation. Even later, police tell the lawyer who is called by the Media Bus team that the bus is suspected of functioning as a coordination point for the "Black Block". All of these accusations by the police are untrue and have no foundation in reality.

Photos and article in Italian: <http://de.indymedia.org/2007/06/182448.shtml>

According to the local newspaper from Bad Doberan "*Stadtanzeiger am Samstag*" (7.6.2007), when questioned as to the incident, the press office of the police unit "BAO Kavala" (BAO: *Besondere Aufbauorganisation*), especially created in 2005 to

coordinate the policing of the summit, apparently did not know of the action and replied cryptically that it was not able to “research” any event that took place in Bad Doberan on the given time span. This is why the press spokesperson did not comment on the police action. Source: [http://www.am-samstag.de/aktuell2007/070607\\_medienbus\\_beschlagnahmt.html](http://www.am-samstag.de/aktuell2007/070607_medienbus_beschlagnahmt.html)

The driver and journalist were detained by the police overnight and released the next morning (7.6.2007) without charge. After interventions by the main journalist trade unions from the Netherlands (NVJ) and Germany (DJV), the Media Bus was released in the afternoon of 7.6.2007. The NJV is now planning to take the German state to court to claim damages. The journalist Hans C. is also considering taking the German state to court.

This incident was not the first infringement of independent media work in Heiligendamm. The Media Bus was unlawfully stopped and searched already on 5.6.2007, without any witnesses present, on its way to the protest rallies that took place near the military airport Rostock-Laage. At 4.45 pm, around 100 riot police from Göppingen stopped and encircled the bus at a parking lot near Ziesendorf nearby the village of Schwaan. The journalists had to leave the bus one by one and they and their luggage were searched, they even had to take off their shoes. All identities were registered. To protect themselves from possible police violence, the journalists were filming the action, however, the police did not allow any filming or photos to be made from outside of the police encirclement, which lasted until 5.40 pm. When asked about the reasons for the police search, the police said the action was ordered by police inspectors Hensel (*Polizeihauptkommissar*) and Schobel (*Polizeioberkommissar*) and that any further information would only be provided by the police coordination unit BAO Kavala.

Photos and Article in German: <http://de.indymedia.org/2007/06/181807.shtml>

BAO Kavala commented on the police action of 5.6.2007 with the dismissive remark that those affected could complain about the infringement via e-mail. A police spokesman present at the rally in Rostock-Laage commented that the police actions had been “normal procedure”, because in the face of the emergency situation fundamental rights, including freedom of press, were “slightly restricted”.

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