

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

About the Ulm 5 Trial in Stuttgart-Stammheim

Thursday, September 24, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

PANEL DISCUSSION

with family members and participating attorneys:

Benjamin Düsberg, Anna Magdalena Busl, Mimi Tatlow-Golden, and others

Language: German–English

Admission: free



“This is precisely why we must discuss the trial against the Ulm 5 today. It raises the question of where exactly the boundaries of state security narratives lie in criminal proceedings—and when the harshness of the proceedings violates the constitutional principle of proportionality.” Jana Trapp, *Stammheim nach Stammheim. Eine Bühne staatlicher Selbstvergewisserung*¹

On **Thursday, September 24, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.**, the Württembergischer Kunstverein (WKV) invites you to a **panel** discussion dedicated to the trial of the so-called Ulm 5 at the Higher Regional Court in Stuttgart-Stammheim, viewed from the perspective of family members, defense attorneys, and supporters. The panel discussion is intended as the kickoff to a series of events on this case, which raises numerous questions about the relationship between the justice system, civil disobedience, and the Staatsräson (state’s *raison d’état*) in Germany. We consider it important to create a space for a counter-public to address this trial and its complex political dimensions. The WKV is particularly well suited to this for a number of reasons.

In 1984, artist Olaf Metzel installed his sculpture *Stammheim*—consisting of a giant “wreath of honor” cast in concrete and the word “Stammheim”—on the outdoor platform of the WKV, where it still stands today and is a popular selfie spot. Far from glorifying the Red Army Faction (RAF), Metzel chose a deliberately anti-heroic, historically open aesthetic form and gesture in order to address the social trauma of the German Autumn and its entrenched polarization.

Almost exactly five decades after the German Autumn, the Stuttgart suburb of Stammheim is once again coming into focus as a symbolically charged setting for a criminal trial. It hardly seems coincidental that the trial of the Ulm 5—a highly diverse group of activists in solidarity with Palestine—is taking place here: in the replacement building for the now-demolished multipurpose structure from 1975, which had been built specifically for the first major trial against the RAF.

The location of the Ulm 5 trial suggests a questionable connection between the RAF’s actions—which accepted the possibility of murder—and the civil disobedience of the defendants—Daniel, Zo, Crow, Vi, and Leandra—which was directed exclusively against property.

While the RAF operated underground, the Ulm 5 allowed themselves to be arrested without resistance after entering the Ulm branch of the Israeli arms company Elbit Systems, where they allegedly committed trespassing, damaged furnishings, and sprayed political graffiti. They themselves had documented their action on site, which they view as emergency aid against the war in Gaza—a conflict that violates international law—in which Elbit Systems is involved through arms deliveries.

¹ <https://verfassungsblog.de/stammheim-nach-stammheim>. See also: <https://ulm5.info>

Through their actions at Elbit Systems, the Ulm 5 may have challenged the justice system and democracy, but not with the intention of destroying them. Rather, their aim is to draw attention to the war in Gaza—which, among others, UN investigators and numerous human rights organizations have described as genocide²—and to the people dying there. They want to initiate a political change of course.

The State Attorney General's Office, on the other hand, maintains the allegation that the Ulm 5 are part of a criminal organization under Section 129 of the German Criminal Code (StGB). They have been in pretrial detention since September 2025. There are restrictions on contact and de facto solitary confinement. The five human rights activists are led into the courtroom in handcuffs and, at the presiding judge's direction, sit behind security glass, separated from their attorneys. The defense is not permitted to appoint its own court reporter.

Even more than the choice of location, these measures—which appear disproportionate—suggest that the Ulm 5 are criminals and a danger to society. That is precisely why we must discuss this trial.

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart
Schloßplatz 2 / Stauffenbergstrasse Entrance
www.wkv-stuttgart.de

² For the legal and political controversy surrounding the term genocide, see, among others: Kai Ambos, *Staatsräson nach Gaza, Das deutsche-israelische Verhältnis und das Völkerrecht* [Staatsräson after Gaza: The German-Israeli Relationship and International Law], Campus Verlag, 2026.