

# GERMAN MINISTER CONCERNED ABOUT “BLAME GAME” AFTER LAST YEAR’S FLOOD

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A series of failures in the prevention of the flood catastrophe of July 2021 cost more than 100 lives in Germany alone. Newly-revealed chats that some high-ranking politicians were more concerned about not being blamed for those failures than about saving lives.

**Category:** [NEWS](#)

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As [reported](#) by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the former Environment Minister of Rhineland-Palatinate Anne Spiegel (Green Party), now Federal Minister of Family and Youth, was primarily concerned with avoiding blame for the catastrophic flood of July 15, 2021, during which 134 people lost their lives and more than 700 people were injured, as revealed by chats between her and her employees the following day.

Spiegel's concern was warranted. The Ministry of Environment had predicted the catastrophe on the afternoon of July 14th, the day before, but instead of releasing an immediate warning, the ministry issued a press release, announcing that "no extreme flooding" was to be expected. At the time of the press release, the first camping sites were already being flooded.

When reports of the devastation were heard the next morning, Anne Spiegel exchanged messages with Dietmar Brück, then her press secretary, on how "the blame game could start any moment," stressing that "a message was needed that we had issued a warning in time" and that "without our preventive measures everything would have turned out a lot worse."

Spiegel was also concerned that other politicians, such as Minister of Interior Roger Lewentz of the Social-Democratic Party (SPD), might claim that a “the catastrophe could have been prevented if the Ministry of Environment had issued a warning earlier.”

On Friday, March 11th, Spiegel will be summoned before the investigative committee to be questioned on her role during the fateful events of July 2021.

Anne Spiegel and the Ministry of Environment are not the only parties accused of mismanagement during the flood of 2021. Jürgen Pföhler, district administrator of the affected region Ahrtal, head of disaster protection, was charged with negligent homicide for failing to organize a timely evacuation at a time when the danger had been predictable.

Other scandals surrounding failed civil protection measures included a conscious choice by some districts [not to set off alarm sirens](#) during the fatal night, as that “might have caused a panic” since “media had not been reporting” on the flood.

In the days following the flood, volunteers had been the first and only help in some of the affected regions, simultaneously reporting that official institutions were either not present, or [slowing down relief efforts](#).

The flood of July 2021 had severely struck large parts of Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. Instances of negligent and incompetent disaster prevention amplified the effects of the flooding and loss of life.

Meanwhile, the media and politicians took the opportunity to use the disaster as fuel for a [debate on climate change](#).