

## Navid Kermani delivers Keynote on 65th Anniversary of the Basic Law (May 23, 2014)

### Abstract

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The German parliament invited German writer and orientalist Navid Kermani to deliver the keynote speech on the 65th anniversary of the Basic Law. In his powerful, critical speech, Kermani, who was born in Siegen, Germany, as the son of immigrant parents from Iran, acknowledged the openness enshrined in the Basic Law. At the same time, he criticized the 1993 reform of article 16, which guaranteed a right to asylum for persons persecuted on political grounds, which severely limited that right. Kermani said:

“Of all things, the Basic Law, in which Germany seemed to have enshrined its openness forever, now excludes those who are most in need of our openness: the politically persecuted. A wonderfully succinct sentence ‘Politically persecuted persons enjoy the right to asylum’ in 1993 turned into a monstrous decree consisting of 275 words, piled on top of each other and tightly interlocked, just to conceal one thing: that Germany has practically abolished asylum as a fundamental right.”

### Source

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Source: Ceremony to mark the 65th anniversary of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, keynote speaker Navid Kermani, 23.05.2014. Photo: Imago/Christian Thiel

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