

GERMANY: Anti-Semitism

Jews abused, spat on in Munich anti-Semitic attacks

– DW (07.08.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2TcJU7v>– Jewish groups say anti-Semitic attacks are happening with increasing frequency in Bavaria. The latest incidents follow several recent high profile cases in other German cities.

Jewish people in Munich suffered two anti-Semitic attacks within days of each other, police and a Jewish group announced on Tuesday.

On Saturday, a rabbi and his two sons were spat on and verbally abused by a man and a woman on their return from the synagogue, according to the police. Police are investigating the two unknown suspects for hate speech and insult.

And on Monday evening, a member of the Jewish community found someone scrawling a Star of David (a Jewish symbol that was also used by Nazis to segregate Jews in the Holocaust) in the stairwell of their apartment building, according to Charlotte Knobloch, president of the Jewish Community for Munich and Upper Bavaria.

“Safety in public spaces, which should be a matter of course for all citizens, is becoming a more distant prospect, especially for members of the Jewish community,” said Knobloch. At a time when hatred in parliament, in society and on the Internet has “increasingly become the background noise of our coexistence,” it is no longer surprising that anti-Semitism is becoming so widespread, she said.

According to the Bavarian Anti-Semitism Research and Information Centre (RIAS), 72 anti-Semitic incidents have been

reported in the southern German state of Bavaria since April – 35 from state capital Munich alone. RIAS says such attacks are just the tip of the iceberg. “The number of unreported cases is high, because many cases do not become public,” director Annette Seidel-Arpaci said.

Interior minister speaks out

Bavaria’s Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann said he strongly condemned such anti-Semitic incidents. He was confident that the identity of the perpetrators would be established. He encouraged the members of the Jewish community not to be intimidated. “We want self-confident Jewish life in the public sphere! We want the Kippa to be worn on Bavaria’s streets as a matter of course.”

Bavaria’s Anti-Semitism Commissioner Ludwig Spaenle called it an “attack on the entire Munich city society.” The Protestant Munich regional bishop, Susanne Breit-Kessler, said on Twitter: “It is shameful that something like this is happening in our city.”

Similar incidents have been reported across Germany in recent weeks. In Berlin, two men speaking Arabic insulted and spat on a rabbi. In Potsdam, a man wearing a kippa was attacked in the same way by a Syrian. And in June, in Hamburg, the State Rabbi Shlomo Bistritzky and a board member of the Jewish community were spat on.

Recommended reading

[Rabbi spat on and cursed at in Berlin](#)

[Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal said two men spat on him while he was walking home from the synagogue with his son. German police are investigating the incident as a religiously-motivated crime. \(31.07.2019\)](#)

Anti-Semitism a growing concern for majority of Europe's young Jews

Young Jewish Europeans believe anti-Semitism is on the rise in their countries. An EU report shows young Jews are concerned about safety and blame social media networks for a rise in anti-Jewish sentiment. (04.07.2019)

'Ignoring' anti-Semitism not an option, German president warns

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier has appealed for Germans to show civic courage in the face of anti-Semitism. The call comes amid growing attacks on Jewish people in Germany. (17.06.2019)

Jews are at risk in Germany, says Jewish council

Germany's central Jewish council has weighed in on the anti-Semitism debate, saying the security situation for Jews has "deteriorated" in major cities. Israel's president has expressed concern over the situation. (26.05.2019)

Germans urged to wear Jewish yarmulke in solidarity

Anti-Semitism Commissioner Felix Klein has called on Germans to don the yarmulke skullcap worn by Jewish men ahead of an anti-Israel protest. The Central Council of Jews has warned about wearing the yarmulke in public. (28.05.2019)

German official warns Jews against wearing kippahs in public

Anti-Semitic attacks in Germany have surged in the past few years. Last year, an attack on two men wearing yarmulkes – also known as kippahs – on a street in Berlin caused widespread outrage in in the country. (25.05.2019)

German parliament condemns 'anti-Semitic' BDS movement

The German Bundestag has passed a resolution describing the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign against Israel as

[anti-Semitic. Parliamentarians said some BDS slogans recalled Nazi propaganda. \(17.05.2019\)](#)

[American attacked in Berlin after saying he's Jewish](#)

[Police are investigating the incident as an anti-Semitic crime. Germany's anti-Semitism commissioner says the rise in such crimes is "alarming." \(20.06.2019\)](#)

FRANCE: Four churches vandalised over the past week

– In one instance a tabernacle was broken into and its contents strewn on the ground

– Anne-Bénédicte Hoffner

HRWF (12.02.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2WZayC8>– France, over the past week, has witnessed a series of churches being vandalized and in some instances desecrated.

The vandalism took place in Nîmes, Lavaur, Houilles and finally in Dijon on Feb. 9.

In Lavaur and Houilles, the criminals only attacked objects and statues, but in Nimes and Dijon, they opened the tabernacle and threw the eucharist.

On Feb. 9 shortly after its opening, the sexton at Notre Dame Church in Dijon saw the tabernacle and the hosts scattered on the altar, a tablecloth rolled into a corner, a vase broken.

A Mass of reparation was celebrated that afternoon by Bishop

Roland Minnerath of Dijon, preceded by a penitential rite, the diocese said in a statement, highlighting the "sadness" of faithful of this parish in the city center.

The series of attacks began Feb. 4 in Houilles, Yvelines. A statue of Mary was found broken in pieces on the ground, in the church of St. Nicholas.

Father Etienne Maroteaux, pastor of the parish of Houilles-Carrières-sur-Seine, again lodged a complaint, having already being subjected to violent attacks during the last two weeks that saw the altar cross thrown to the ground and the chair of the celebrant wrecked.

The next incident took place on Feb. 5 at the Saint-Alain Cathedral in Lavaur, in the Tarn. The secretary of the parish who came to shut the cathedral found the smoking remains of the tablecloth of the altar of a side chapel, as well the nativity scene that was there, the fire had not spread, reports *La Dépêche du Midi*. A cross was also thrown down and the arm of the crucified Christ statue twisted to look like the famous gesture of the footballer Paul Pogba.

"God will forgive. Not me," said the city's mayor Bernard Carayon, whose town hall had just contributed to expensive renovations of the church building.

"I strongly condemn the vandalism of Lavaur Cathedral and I share the outrage aroused by this intolerable act," said Jean Terlier, deputy of the district, while assuring the Catholic community of his support.

On Feb. 6, the police were called to the church in Nîmes.

The tabernacle was broken into and its contents strewn on the ground. Religious objects were vandalized and a cross was drawn on the wall with excrement, reports the local press.

Investigations are underway to try to find the wrongdoers.

See video on TV Channel France 2:

https://www.francetvinfo.fr/france/vandalisme-plusieurs-eglises-visees-par-des-profanations_3187009.html

Anti-Semitic acts surged by 74 percent from 311 in 2017 to 541 in 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvuY0TJBPeM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHx6ukPzb3g>

Op-ed: About Anti-Semitism: HRWF's position

– By Willy Fautré, Human Rights Without Frontiers

– HRWF (26.10.2018) – What is and what is not antisemitism, a widely spread concept about which there is no consensus in the international community? ‘Everybody’ has his own definition of antisemitism which is partly endorsed by some and challenged by others. A few examples will illustrate the confusion that prevails on this issue.

Definitions

The general definition of antisemitism is hostility or prejudice against Jews but various authorities have developed other definitions.

For the purposes of its 2005 Report on Global Anti-Semitism, the term was considered by the US State Department to mean “**hatred toward Jews—individually and as a group—that can be**

attributed to the Jewish religion and/or ethnicity.” (1)

In 2005, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (now EU Fundamental Rights Agency), developed a more detailed working definition, which states: **“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”** It also adds that **“such manifestations could also target the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity,”** but that **“criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.” (2)**

Late in 2013, the definition was removed from the website of the Fundamental Rights Agency. A spokesperson said that it had never been regarded as official and that the agency did not intend to develop its own definition (3). However, despite its disappearance from the website of the Fundamental Rights Agency, the definition has gained widespread international use. The definition has been adopted by the EU Working Group on Antisemitism and in 2010 it was adopted by the US Department of State. Other institutions followed suit.

In 2016, the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) – a body of 31 Member Countries, ten Observer Countries and seven international partner organisations – adopted the following working definition of antisemitism, making it the most widely endorsed definition of antisemitism around the world:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.” (4)

The IHRA was also endorsed by the OSCE/ ODIHR, an organization grouping together 57 states (5).

Mark Weitzman, Chair of the IHRA Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial, which proposed the adoption of the definition in 2015, said: "In order to begin to address the problem of antisemitism, there must be clarity about what antisemitism actually is. This is not a simple question. The adopted working definition helps provide guidance in answer to this challenging question. Crucially, the definition adopted by the IHRA is endorsed by experts, is relevant and is of practical applicability."

Position of HRWF

Due to the confusion prevailing about what is and what is not antisemitism, as well as the abuse of the concept for political purposes in concrete incidents and situations,

- HRWF avoids the use of the word "antisemitism" as it avoids the use of "islamophobia" for the same reasons
- HRWF uses the term "anti-Jewish" to qualify ideologies, state policies, hate speech, incidents and various forms of violence targeting Jews, their communities, their community buildings...
- HRWF reserves the use of the term "anti-Israel" for writings, speeches, demonstrations... criticizing the State of Israel.

(1) "Report on Global Anti-Semitism", U.S. State Department, 5 January 2005.

(2) "Working Definition of Antisemitism". European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Archived from the original on 5 January 2010. Retrieved 24 July 2010.

(3) Jewish Telegraphic Agency (5 December 2013). "What is anti-Semitism? EU racism agency unable to define term". Jerusalem Post. (<https://bit.ly/20P8Ym0>)

(4) See <https://bit.ly/2ArCQfi> and <https://bit.ly/25wbn73>

(5) See “Understanding Anti-Semitic Hate Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Jewish Communities” (<https://www.osce.org/odihr/317166?download=true>)

Some Jewish issues in Denmark, France, Germany, Belgium, Hungary

HRWF (02.06.2018) – Various issues concerning Jews in Europe have recently gained momentum in the media: the debate on the ban of circumcision in Iceland and other Scandinavian countries, acts of violence targeting Jews in other countries. See hereafter a short overview concerning their situation in several EU countries.

Danish parliament set to debate proposal to ban circumcision

By Cnaan Liphshiz

JTA (01.06.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2sq3WPI> – Denmark’s parliament is set to debate and possibly vote on whether nonmedical circumcision of boys should be banned after more than 50,000 people signed a petition requesting its criminalization.

The petition by the group Denmark Intact crossed the 50,000 mark Friday, four months after its launch. According to regulations passed in January, petitions approved for posting on the Danish parliament’s website are brought to a vote as nonbinding motions if they receive that level of support within six months.

The petition describes circumcision as a form of abuse and corporal punishment, equating it with female genital mutilation. The petition states that parents who have their children circumcised outside Denmark should be exposed to legal action in Denmark, which has 8,000 Jews and tens of thousands of Muslims.

But last week, spokespeople for all the parties in the Danish parliament stated their faction's positions on the issue. The tally showed that a majority of lawmakers would vote against supporting a ban if the issue is brought to a vote, the *Kristeligt Dagblad* daily newspaper reported. Nonetheless, a vote on the petition is likely to take place in the fall unless its language is deemed unconstitutional.

Some parties, including large coalition partners, are split on the issue. But Finn Rudaizky, a former leader of the Jewish community of Denmark, said "parliament will not change the law" that currently allows circumcision. Still, he said, the petition "does mean a great deal because it shows just how many have involved themselves with this issue."

Whereas some of those who oppose nonmedical circumcision do so because of their understanding of children's rights, "many others use the situation to show that they are against Jews, Muslims and they can express anti-Semitism and xenophobia without admitting to it," Rudaizky said. "I am not proud of this situation."

No country in Europe has banned circumcision since the defeat of fascism in World War II.

In 2014, Denmark joined a handful of European Union countries that forbid the slaughter of animals for meat without stunning, as required by Jewish and Muslim religious laws. Earlier this week, Denmark joined several EU countries banning the wearing in public of face-covering garments, such as the burka and nikab veils favored by some Muslim women.

Iceland's parliament earlier this year briefly processed a bill to ban circumcision. It was put on ice following a parliamentary committee's recommendation to nix it amid international pressure.

Opposition to circumcision and the ritual slaughter of animals in Europe features liberal activists who cite humanist motivations and anti-immigration individuals who view the customs as undesirable foreign imports.

French public schools told to enforce 2004 ban on kippah, Muslim head cover

JTA (01.06.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2J334L7> – The French Education Ministry sent out a circular reminding teachers that wearing religious symbols in public schools is illegal and urging them to punish noncompliant students.

The reminder appeared in an 83-page document sent Wednesday to thousands of public schools throughout France titled “handbook on laïcité,” a French-language word describing the principal of ensuring both religious freedom and the separation of religion from the state.

Like a document distributed in 2016 on the same subject, the handbook lists both the Jewish kippah, or yarmulke, as forbidden to be worn in public schools, along with head covers favored by Muslim females and large cross pendants. But it goes further than the earlier document in that it instructs teachers to pursue disciplinary measures against those who “test the application” of these rules, as per a law from 2004, the Marianne magazine reported Friday.

The handbook states it seeks primarily to “check the spread of extremist viewpoints,” a statement many take to mean radical Islam. It also calls for disciplinary action against students who refuse for religious reasons to partake in activities that some devout individuals consider improper, such as swimming lessons with members of both genders or sexual education

classes.

Long skirts that appear to comply with religious requirements also are not allowed.

However, the handbook also says that the application of the ban on religious symbols should be “on a per-case basis,” according to La Depeche daily.

Whereas in the 1990s the majority of Jewish children attended public schools in France, only a third of them do so today, according to Francis Kalifat, the head of the CRIF umbrella group of French Jewish communities. Thousands have left the public education system due to anti-Semitism, he said, including virtually all of the children from observant families where males wear a kippah and girls wear long skirts.

Still, in some places, including the affluent Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine, Jewish parents enroll their children in public schools that are considered safer than others because Jews comprise more than half of the student body. But even there, more observant parents tend to enroll their children in Jewish private schools.

Meyer Habib, a lawmaker in the lower house of the French parliament and a former vice president of the CRIF, said he supported the regulations, which he said would have little to no effect on the daily lives of French Jews.

Still, he urged selective enforcement of the regulations.

“Jewish symbols must not be treated the same as characteristics of radical Islam,” he told Ynet. “We’ve never killed innocents in Europe generally and in France specifically in the names of Jewish values,” he said of Jews.

Germany’s Jews urged not to wear kippahs after attacks

BBC

(24.04.2018)

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<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43884075> – The leader of

Germany's Jewish community has advised Jews to avoid wearing traditional skullcaps (kippahs) following anti-Semitic attacks.

Josef Schuster, the president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, told Berlin public radio that Jews should exercise caution in big cities. His comments come ahead of a "Berlin Wears Kippah" solidarity march in the German capital on Wednesday.

Last week, two young men wearing kippahs were assaulted in the city. The attacker was filmed shouting anti-Semitic abuse.

Jewish organisations in Germany have expressed alarm over a number of recent anti-Semitic insults and threats in schools.

At the weekend, Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned what she described as "another form of anti-Semitism".

She told Israel's Channel 10 TV network that aside from anti-Semitism by right-wing groups, similar threats were coming from some Muslim refugees in the country.

What did Josef Schuster say?

"Defiantly showing your colours would in principle be the right way to go [to tackle anti-Semitism]," he said.

"Nevertheless, I would advise individual people against openly wearing a kippah in big German cities," Mr Schuster added.

But he also stressed that if Germans refused to stand up to anti-Semitism "our democracy would be at risk".

"This is not only about anti-Semitism – it goes along with racism, it goes along with xenophobia. You need a clear stop sign here."

What about reaction from other groups?

Mr Schuster's comments apparently contradict the position

taken on the kippah issue by the Berlin-based Jewish Forum for Democracy and Against Anti-Semitism – the organisation which shared video of last week's attack on Facebook (<https://jfda.de/blog/2018/04/17/antisemitischer-angriff-in-berlin-prenzlauer-berg/>)

"I used to always advise my Jewish friends and acquaintances not to wear a kippah so as not to show their Jewish identity. I changed my opinion," a spokesman said last week.

"We must take up this fight and be visible again in public."

Separately, the head of Germany's Central Council of Muslims condemned recent anti-Semitic attacks.

"Anti-Semitism, racism and hatred are great sins in Islam, therefore we will also never tolerate that," Aiman Mazyek told Germany's Rheinische Post newspaper.

Germany's Jewish population has grown rapidly since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Before 1989, the population was below 30,000 but an influx of Jews, mainly from the former Soviet Union, has raised the number to more than 200,000.

Belgian TV cannot find a single Jew to agree to wear a yarmulke in public

Elder of Zion (28.05.2018) – <http://elderofzion.blogspot.com/2018/05/belgian-tv-cannot-find-single-jew-to.html> – Natasha Mann, a reporter for Belgian broadcaster RTBF, was preparing a report on antisemitism in Belgium and wanted to have a visual of a Jew being seen in Brussels in a Jewish skullcap.

So she asked around the Jewish community to find someone who would be willing to be part of the story, just to walk around the capital for the cameras.

For ten years, most observant Jews in Brussels have been wearing caps or hats to avoid being seen publicly as Jews and to avoid being attacked.

After three weeks of looking for a single Jew to be part of the story, she had to give up. The Jewish community is so frightened of Jew-haters that literally none of them would agree to publicly wear the most basic and unobtrusive of Jewish symbols.

First, Mann contacted a couple of rabbis. After finding out which neighborhood Mann wanted them to appear in, they declined. The Chief Rabbi, who was attacked a number of years ago, originally accepted the idea but the community leaders convinced him it was not a good idea.

Mann went to other Jewish community leaders. She thought she hit paydirt when one man said he wanted to do the story, saying that he is sick of being harassed for being a Jew. Mann asked him, "Do you complain to police when you hear antisemitic insults?" He answered back, "Do you complain to police when men whistle at you in the street?" Ultimately, he declined to do the story as well.

Joel Rubinfeld, the president of the Belgian league against anti-Semitism, who normally does not wear a yarmulke, agreed to do the story – but only if he is escorted by a security officer who is in contact with the police. It is too complicated.

The story ran without the visual Mann wanted, which says a lot about how fearful the Jewish community in Belgium is, today.

Here is the story that was broadcast, without a single Jew willing to wear a yarmulke – and with a teen victim of antisemitism and his mother too afraid to show their faces (<http://elderofziyon.blogspot.com/2018/05/belgian-tv-cannot-find-single-jew-to.html>)

The safest country for European Jews? Try Hungary

By David P. Goldman

PJ Media (28.05.2018) – <https://pjmedia.com/spengler/the-safest-country-for-european-jews-try-hungary/> – Last Friday evening I put on a kippah and walked half an hour across Budapest to the Keren Or synagogue maintained by the Budapest Chabad.

After violent attacks on Jews in German streets, the leaders of Germany's Jewish community warned Jews last month not to wear a kippah or any other visible sign of Jewish identification in public.

The French community issued such warnings years ago.

Belgian TV could not find a single Jew in Brussels willing to wear a kippah in public. I walked across Budapest four times (for Friday evening and Saturday daytime services), and no-one looked at my kippah twice. At services I met Hasidim who had walked to synagogue with kaftan and shtreimel, the traditional round fur hat. Whatever residual anti-Semitism remains among Hungarians, it doesn't interfere with the open embrace of Jewish life. There are no risks to Jews because there are very few Muslim migrants.

On any given Friday evening, the Keren Or synagogue—one of several Chabad houses in Budapest—hosts two hundred people for dinner. Jewish life isn't just flourishing in Budapest. It's roaring with ruach, and livened by a growing Israeli presence. About 100,000 Israelis have dual Hungarian citizenship; many own property in the country and vote in Hungarian elections.

France expels controversial Salafist preacher to Algeria

France24 (19.04.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2F7IvpU> – Controversial Salafist preacher, Imam El Hadi Douidi, who was based in the southern French city of Marseille, was expelled to Algeria Friday morning following a lengthy legal process, according to a French media report.

The 63-year-old preacher – who was born in Algeria and does not have French citizenship – was expelled on Friday, the AFP reported quoting an unnamed French interior ministry source.

The expulsion followed a deportation order issued by the French interior ministry on Tuesday.

But Douidi's expulsion application was suspended pending a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which finally ruled in favour of the deportation on Thursday.

The ruling followed an appeal by the Salafist cleric's lawyer, Nabil Boudi, who argued that his client would be tortured or suffer "inhuman or degrading treatment" if he was returned to Algeria.

The court granted the French government 72 hours "to gather the additional information necessary to make an informed decision". Douidi was held in an administrative detention center pending the court's final ruling.

Sermons targeting women, Jews, Shiites

The imam of the as-Sounna mosque, in the heart of Marseille, was one of the most high profile cases in the French government's effort to combat radicalisation.

The new de-radicalisation plan announced by French President Emmanuel Macron's government includes increased surveillance

of Muslim clerics accused of hate speech and incitement to violence.

The as-Sounna mosque was closed in December following allegations that Doudi was provoking discrimination, hatred and violence toward an individual or group.

A confidential government investigative report, seen by the New York Times, cited numerous sermons by Doudi, where he preached that Jews are “unclean, the brothers of monkeys and pigs”. Women, the preacher stressed, could not leave their homes without authorisation, and an apostate “needs to be eliminated by the death penalty to protect Muslims”.

In its expulsion application, the French Interior Ministry cited the radical imam’s “deliberate incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence against a particular person or group of persons”, notably women, Jews, Shiites and people committing adultery.

Radical clerics under scrutiny

Following a spate of deadly terrorist incidents since the 2015 Charlie Hebdo attacks, France has tightened its anti-terror laws while attempting to tackle the spread of Islamist extremism particularly in French prisons, schools, mosques and Islamic centres.

Between 2012 and 2015, the French Interior Ministry expelled 40 Muslim clerics while another 52 people – including clerics – were expelled over the past 28 months, according to the New York Times.

In 2017, 20 radicalised foreign nationals were expelled from French territory, according to French Interior Minister Gérard Collomb.

Last month, France expelled Mohammed Tlaghi, a substitute imam at a mosque in Torcy, an eastern Parisian suburb, due to

radical sermons, under an expulsion order issued on March 2.

The as-Sounna mosque, where Doudi preached, has been closed since December 11, 2017, when the Marseille police department issued a six-month closure order, which was ratified by France's top administrative court earlier this year.

(FRANCE 24 with AFP)