

Germany: Anti-Semitic attack at Hamburg synagogue

A German man dressed in military fatigues attacked another man outside a synagogue in the German city of Hamburg, according to police. Germany's foreign minister said anti-Semitic attacks are not isolated incidents.

DW News (04.10.2020) – <https://bit.ly/3iASrvU> – A man attacked a Jewish citizen outside the Hohe Weide synagogue in Hamburg on Sunday, according to police.

The man swung a foldable shovel, injuring a 26-year-old before the synagogue's security personnel were able to restrain him. He was later taken into custody by Hamburg police. Germany's DPA news agency reported the 29-year-old suspect was carrying a piece of paper with a swastika in his pocket.

The victim, reported to be a Jewish student, suffered serious injuries to the head and was admitted to a local hospital for treatment, according to the daily Süddeutsche Zeitung. His injuries are serious though not life-threatening.

Police said the attacker, a German with Kazakh roots, was accused of causing grievous bodily harm and appeared to be acting alone. A police spokesperson said the motive for the attack was still under investigation and that the suspect was "extremely confused" leaving investigators unable immediately to question him.

Members of the city's Jewish community were at the synagogue celebrating Sukkoth.

'Why does this keep happening?'

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas denounced the attack as anti-Semitic and called on people to show more civil courage.

"This is not an isolated incident, this is disgusting anti-Semitism and we must all oppose it!" Maas wrote in a tweet.

"As we mark the one-year anniversary of the Yom Kippur attack in Halle, Germany, which left two dead, I am saddened to learn that once again, this time on the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, a German Jewish community is confronting a violent, antisemitic act of terror," World Jewish Congress President Ronald S. Lauder said in a statement.

"We must ask ourselves, and German local and national authorities must address the question – why does this keep happening? Why is anti-Semitism thriving, and why does anyone believe there is room for such hate?" Lauder added. "Our young people must not learn from those who hate. The German government must take responsibility in strengthening education so that the next generation understands that hatred of any kind is never permissible. The long-term viability of Jewish life in Germany depends on it."

Jewish community shaken

The German Orthodox Rabbinical Conference (ORD) has described the attack as “another shock to the Jewish community in Germany.”

“It is unbearable to see hatred and violence against Jews erupt again and again on German streets, and this comes during the holiest Jewish holidays and one year after the terrible attack in Halle,” said ORD chairman Avichai Apel on Sunday.

Apel added “Jewish life as a whole must be better protected in this country,” and demanded that German society “take even more decisive action against hate and incitement on the internet, against right-wing extremist agitators, against the Neo Nazi scene and crude conspiracy theorists, and do more for prevention, education and the promotion of civic courage.”

Nearly one year since Halle attack

The attack in Hamburg came ahead of the one-year anniversary of a deadly Yom Kippur synagogue attack in the eastern German city of Halle. In that attack, a man armed with a gun attempted to break down a door to a synagogue as worshipers gathered for the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. Though he was not able to enter the synagogue, two people were shot dead and others were injured.

Germany has recently seen an increase in anti-Semitic crimes, leading Chancellor Angela Merkel to declare some Jews do not

feel safe in Germany.

Battling COVID, Iran regime makes Jews its bogeyman

– Iran has used the pandemic to spin some particularly vicious antisemitic propaganda, write the Anti-Defamation League's Shaya Lerner and David Andrew Weinberg

Iranwire (03.04.2020) – <https://iranwire.com/en/blogs/26/6884>
– To date, Iran has had the **highest number of reported deaths** from the COVID-19 global pandemic out of any country in Asia other than China. While battling this virus, the regime has once again become the number one state sponsor of scapegoating Jewish people, baselessly blaming world Jewry for the disease's spread.

Indeed, this crisis has led the regime to engage in fantastical, outrageous conspiracy theories about the current pandemic that are deeply infused with antisemitism, including **classic tropes**. These include claiming the disease is an attack on Iran by using genies and magic, that COVID-19 is part of an external biological attack on Iran by the United States with Jewish and Israeli assistance, and that the virus is part of a Zionist plot to gain global power.

Accusing Jews of Sorcery

Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei delivered a major **annual** speech on March 22 in which he **emphasized**: "Americans are being accused of creating this virus" and even claimed "there are enemies who are genies, and there are enemies who are humans, and they help one another. The intelligence services of many countries cooperate with one another against us."

The Supreme Leader did not explicitly identify Jews or Israel in this regard, but his own office soon clarified the point. Khamenei's official website **elaborated** on his speech, posting remarks from a cleric who **explained**: "There is no doubt that the Jews and especially the Zionists previously have a long history of supernatural affairs and matters such as a relationship with the devil and genies" and "Israel's spy agencies also undoubtedly take advantage of these matters."

The **official** Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting then **promoted** this cleric's explanation of Khamenei's speech as well.

The cyberwarfare division of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) posted Khamenei's speech followed by an undated television clip from Iran's **state-run, youth-oriented** Channel Three. The clip featured another cleric **asserting** that "the Jews are experts in sorcery and in creating relationships with demons," and that "Israel wanted to use demonic force to infiltrate the intelligence systems of Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas."

Accusing Jews of Biological Warfare

The regime's propaganda has also spread the baseless allegation that COVID-19 is the result of a biological attack by outside forces to weaken Iran carried out by the US,

Israel, or Zionists and Jews.

For example, Iranian MP Gholamali Jafarzadeh **tweeted** that the disease's progression "is not normal, and I believe it is a kind of biological attack by the US and the Zionist regime."

Similarly, London-based Iran analyst Kasra Aarabi has **documented** that Iranian state television recently hosted a professor from the IRGC's medical academy describing COVID-19 as a "biological ethnic weapon" created by "Americans and [the] Zionist regime."

Other communication sources **linked** to the IRGC have declared that COVID-19 is a "Zionist biological terrorist attack" and that Israel may have already conducted "twelve bioterrorist attacks against the people of Iran." Iran's **state-run** English-language PressTV explained the Iranian death toll by **claiming** that "Zionist elements developed [a] deadlier strain of coronavirus against Iran."

However, most of these conspiracy theories imagine the United States leading such a biological attack, either with the help of **Jewish capitalists** or **Israel**, or **to benefit Israel** or at the **behest** of **Jewish puppet masters**.

Another bizarre conspiracy theory in this regard centers on an **old medical study** at Stanford University that sequenced genomes from individuals of Iranian descent to help calibrate **blood thinner dosages**.

A medical expert on Iran's **state-run** Ofogh TV recently cited this study to try to prove that COVID-19 is an ethnic bioweapon targeting Iranians, **asserting** that "25,000 of our genes are held by the Americans and Israelis" as a result of "\$200,000 donated to the university by a Baha'i foundation." Iran's semi-official Tasnim News Agency even **suggested** that this American research project at Stanford was likely conducted by Baha'is of secret Jewish origin.

Accusing Jews of World Domination

Another central theme of Iranian regime propaganda regarding the global health crisis has been the **antisemitic conspiracy theory** that Jews are all-powerful or seek world domination.

For example, Tasnim News Agency has been running a series of articles alleging that the virus is part of an American and Jewish plot to gain world domination through population control, including an article **claiming** this strategy was hatched by “the unique Jewish scholar and American strategist Henry Alfred Kissinger,” who the piece describes as being a master controller of government and international finance to this day.

Another Tasnim article about COVID-19 **suggested** that the Western world is founded on the immoral principles found in Niccolo Machiavelli’s book *The Prince*. The article went on to inaccurately argue that the Medici rulers for whom Machiavelli wrote the book were Jewish and even responsible for the modern institution of usurious lending.

Similarly, Iran’s English-language PressTV has recently **warned**: “Don’t be surprised if the recent coronavirus phenomenon has a New World Order fingerprint,” similar to what it called “the Zionist/Neocon false flag events of 9/11/2001” to help a “self-serving psychopathic elite to achieve a one-world government.”

Exporting Antisemitism

Just as Iran’s fanatical regime is founded on the principle of exporting its revolution abroad, its conspiratorial and antisemitic propaganda about COVID-19 is also encouraged for export.

Iran is now broadcasting the fallacy that COVID-19 is a Jewish and American plot into numerous Western languages, such as **in French** and **English** on PressTV, as well as **in Spanish** on Iran's HispanTV.

Iranian-backed insurgents in Yemen are now propagating the theory that COVID-19 is a Jewish conspiracy **to profit** from Muslim deaths and **to stop** Muslims from going on pilgrimage, antisemitic slanders that semi-official Iranian news outlets are all too happy to **rebroadcast** as **news**.

The Iranian people have unfortunately been hit hard by COVID-19, and we can expect the regime to continue blaming Jews, Israel, and America as the current public health crisis transpires. With COVID-19 continuing its deadly spread across the globe, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) will keep exposing this kind of hateful and antisemitic scapegoating wherever it occurs.

Shaya Lerner is ADL's Associate Director of Middle Eastern Affairs. David Andrew Weinberg is ADL's Washington Director for International Affairs.

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)