

Attacks on Germany's Mosques Were Preceded by Spike in Migrant Crimes - AfD MEP

Germany's Muslims have called upon the government to protect mosques amid increasing bomb threats and Islamophobia. But according to the Deputy Leader of the AfD in Rhineland-Palatinate Joachim Paul, the rise in crimes could have been fuelled by the refugee crisis that started in mid-2015.

Germany's Coordination Council of Muslims, an umbrella entity for the country's four Islamic organizations, has raised concerns over the apparent spike in anti-Muslim attacks in the country, urging Berlin to take necessary measures to ensure the safety of mosques and Muslims in the country.

On 18 July, Hurriyet reported, citing the Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB), one of the largest Islamic organizations in Germany, that at least six DITIB mosques and an Arab mosque were attacked in the country in just 10 days.

"Muslims and Muslim houses of worship need the protection of the state more than ever and rightly expect symbolic assistance from leading German government and opposition politicians," the organization said in an official statement.

According to the German Interior Ministry, at least 813 anti-Islamic crimes against Muslims and mosques were registered in the country in 2018, while the ministry's 2017 data indicated 950 Islamophobic offenses. Germany has the second-largest Muslim population in Western Europe amounting to about 5 million people.

2015 Refugee Crisis & Growing Crime Rates

"The state is obliged to protect the lives and the rights of every German citizen, despite their age, sex, sexual orientation and, of course, religion," said Joachim Paul, MEP and Deputy Leader of the AfD in the Country of Rhineland-Palatinate. "If Mosques or Muslims come under attack, it's the police's duty to prevent them

from harm. But I think that it is wrong to demand policies which aim to promote tolerance towards Muslims only. It is just as important to raise tolerance among Muslims.”

Paul believes it’s important to take a look at the broader picture and bear in mind that the recent rise in anti-Muslim attacks in Germany was preceded by a number of assaults committed by immigrants and asylum seekers from the Middle East and North Africa amid the refugee crisis that erupted in 2015. Since mid-2015, over 1.5 million migrants have entered the country encouraged by Chancellor Angela Merkel’s open border policy.

According to Aiman Mazyek, Chief of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, “we have to counteract the impression, that Muslims are being treated as second class victims. A few days ago a discussion started through the media about the renouncing of pork meat at two kindergartens in Leipzig (East-Germany). This led to great outrages so that the security authorities are now putting these kindergartens under police protection. The outrage about violations against mosques, the holy Quran and bomb threats against mosques was kept limited and there have been no security activities from the authorities since then.”

The German Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) report, released in May 2018, shed light on a growing number of criminal activities including sexual offenses, bodily assaults, thefts, homicides and other crimes committed by migrants from the Middle East and North Africa between 2015 and 2017. According to the report, 4,852 migrants were suspected of being involved in sexual crimes in 2017, up from 3,329 in 2016.

“Furthermore there have been several terrorist attacks committed by Islamists in Germany and Europe over the last few years,” said Paul. “It can be concluded, that certain parts of Muslim society are unwilling to integrate into Western societies. Instead, they want to transform our society according to their beliefs.”

According to the Heritage Foundation, a Washington DC-based US conservative think tank, 44 refugees or asylum seekers were involved in 32 Islamist plots in Europe between 2014 and 2018 which led to 814 injuries and 182 deaths.

The think tank’s study found that “while plots were devised or carried out in 12 different countries, the most frequent target was Germany” adding that “the majority of plots had direct ties to [Daesh] ISIS*”.

Having stressed that “integration is always an obligation,” the German MEP notes that “it’s important to differentiate between Muslims willing to integrate more closely and those determined to live a parallel existence - rather than charting out a new, more active concept of German citizenship.”

“If people want to become German citizens, they will have to accept our values,” said Paul. “Those who are willing to do so are welcome to stay everyone else is free to leave Germany and Europe”.

**Daesh (ISIS/ISIL) is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.*

The views and opinions expressed by the speaker do not necessarily reflect those of Sputnik.

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