

German states plan to lock up quarantine breakers

Berlin: Germans who repeatedly refuse to quarantine after being exposed to coronavirus will be locked up in detention centres under tough rules drawn up by regional authorities and permitted by emergency powers.

The eastern state of Saxony has confirmed plans to hold quarantine breakers in a fenced-off section of a refugee camp, to be constructed next week.



Berliners stay distanced at a vaccine centre. *CREDIT:GETTY IMAGES*

Three further states - Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg and Schleswig-Holstein - have also either already created such facilities or are in the process of doing so, a report in *Die Welt* newspaper stated on Sunday.

In Baden-Württemberg, two hospitals will have rooms reserved for repeat offenders, which will be guarded by police. Brandenburg will use a section of a

refugee centre, while Schleswig-Holstein will use an area within a juvenile detention centre.

Dr Christoph Degenhart, an expert in administrative law, told *Die Welt* that state governments had been given powers to detain people for breaching quarantine rules under the disease protection act, an emergency law.

The messy race to replace Germany's 'remarkable' Angela Merkel

It is unclear just how many people have refused to follow quarantine rules in Germany. But several states have said that they have no plans to set up similar detention facilities due to the fact that so few people had broken the rules.

With debate in Germany highly fractious since the beginning of the winter lockdown, the detention facilities have drawn comparison to political prisons in East Germany. Joana Cotar, an MP for the populist Alternative for Germany party, accused the government of Saxony of "reading too much Orwell".

Ethical questions around the pandemic were also stirred by comments made by Heiko Maas, the foreign minister, who told *Bild* newspaper that vaccinated people should be allowed to use cinemas and restaurants again.

"It's true that inequality would be created but it would be for a transitional period and if there is evidence to back it up, it's constitutionally OK," Maas said. One politician from the conservative CDU party rejected the proposal on Sunday as "social dynamite".

Source:

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/german-states-plan-to-lock-up-quarantine-breakers-20210118-p56uy1.html>

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