

Islamist children pose real ‘threat’ to Germany, spy chief warns

Germany’s domestic intelligence chief has warned that children growing up in Islamist families in Germany may pose a risk to society. Conservative politicians say authorities should be allowed to monitor kids under 14.



Children from Islamist households in Germany represent a “not insignificant potential threat,” the head of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), Germany’s domestic intelligence service, Hans-Georg Maassen said Monday.

In a new report cited by the Funke media group, the BfV said there were signs the “radicalization of minors and young adults” was becoming more likely and happening faster and earlier.

The BfV document estimated that some 300 children in Germany were affected. Children in some of these families are “educated from birth with an extremist world view that legitimizes violence against others and degrades those who aren’t part of their group,” the report said.

It expressed concerns about families who had traveled to war zones in the Middle

East, as well as those who had remained in Germany.

Maassen warned that what he described as the ongoing jihadist socialization of children was “alarming” and would pose a significant challenge to authorities in the coming years.

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Monitoring minors

The BfV findings have led to calls from politicians in Chancellor Angela Merkel’s Christian Democratic Union (CDU) to drop the age limit for surveillance candidates to under 14.

“This is not about criminalizing people under the age of 14, but about warding off significant threats to our country, like Islamic terrorism, which also targets children,” CDU politician Patrick Sensburg told the Funke media group.

The German civil rights organization Humanist Union (HU) told DW it was unreasonable to consider children a threat to the democratic constitutional order because “their ideas and opinions aren’t yet fully developed and are subject to change.”

“Putting children under surveillance is therefore a massive violation of their fundamental rights,” HU board member Martin Kutscha said.

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Stephan Mayer, the interior affairs spokesman for the CDU’s Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), said such a measure would also be for the protection of the children affected, adding that some of the individuals who traveled to crisis regions in Syria and Iraq to join jihad were very young.

Herbert Reul, the CDU Interior Minister of the western state of North-Rhine Westphalia, said authorities needed appropriate “instruments to be able to deal with traumatized and violent returnees under the age of 14.”

The state lowered its age limit for surveillance from 16 to 14 in 2016.

nm/rt (Reuters, AFP, dpa, KNA)

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