

Nationwide register for anti-Semitic offenses in Germany - commissioner

Germany's incoming anti-Semitism commissioner is to establish a central register for anti-Jewish crime. Meanwhile in the Bundestag, MPs condemned anti-Semitism and stressed Germany's friendship with Israel.

Felix Klein, Germany's first anti-Semitism commissioner told public radio that in order to better understand anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish sentiment establishing a central register is to be a priority when he takes office on May 1.

"There has always been anti-Semitism in Germany, but it is more blatant now, more aggressive," he told rbb public radio.

Read more: Head of Germany's Council of Jews calls for stronger laws against anti-Semitic protests

He stressed that there were already good regional initiatives, but that a nationwide register would help get "a good overview" of anti-Jewish offenses in Germany.

His comments come just a day after thousands of people took to the streets of Berlin wearing Jewish skullcaps, known as kippas, to protest anti-Semitism and the attack on an Israeli by three Arabic-speaking men last week.

Anti-Semitism 'at heart of society'

Klein said that while there are concerns about anti-Semitism among some Muslim migrant, he is most worried about what he termed "secondary anti-Semitism, which lies at the heart of society...people who are prejudiced; supposedly funny jokes at the dinner table."

"That's a challenge for our society, which can only be solved medium-to-longterm," he told rbb.

He also said he wants to improve cooperation with Germany's Muslim

associations, whose response to anti-Semitism, he says, could be “more coordinated.”

Read more: Islam in Germany: Muslims prefer to be talked to rather than talked about

Bundestag debate on Israel

Meanwhile, MPs in the German parliament, the Bundestag, marked the 70th anniversary this year of the founding of the State of Israel, with some lawmakers wearing kippas for the occasion.

Read more: The kippa – a sign of respect for God

The Bundestag approved a motion brought by the CDU and CSU, the FDP and the SPD on Germany’s historical responsibility and future friendship with Israel.

All parties agreed that “anti-Semitism must never again be part of Germany” and that Germany must be “Israel’s guarantor,” as Green politician Katrin Göring-Eckardt put it.

The Left’s parliamentary party leader, Dietmar Bartsch, called the fact that there was any anti-Semitism at all “shameful.”

Migrants and anti-Semitism

SPD chair Andrea Nahles said that Germany was responsible for the killing of millions of Jews in World War II and that that “responsibility does not simply end, neither for subsequent generations nor for those who come to our country,” alluding to anti-Jewish sentiment among some of the recent migrants to Germany from Muslim countries.

“We will always and categorically defend Israel’s right to exist,” she added.

Conservative CDU MP Volker Kauder stressed that anti-Semitism in Germany had been there long before the recent arrival of Muslim migrants after populist AfD politician Alexander Gauland said that “anti-Semitism should not turn into collateral damage of a misguided refugee policy.”

Source: <http://www.dw.com/en/nationwide-register-for-anti-semitic-offenses-in-germany-commissioner/a-43545539>

[Disclaimer]