

Germany briefing

July/August 2023

Key figures

Between 5.3 and 5.6 million Muslims live in Germany (as of 2020), which corresponds to a share of 6.4 to 6.7% of the total population. While around 25% of Muslims have immigrated since 2014, mostly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, today around 45% still have Turkish roots with a declining trend.

Islamophobia

Two reports published reveal scale of Islamophobic attacks in Germany and public support for Islamophobic beliefs

- At the end of June, the report "Muslimfeindlichkeit - Eine deutsche Bilanz" commissioned by the Federal Ministry of the Interior was presented.
- According to the report, every second German agrees with anti-Muslim statements. In this report, „Muslimophobia“ is defined as the attribution of sweeping, largely unchangeable, backward and threatening characteristics to Muslims and people perceived as Muslim, through which foreignness or even hostility is consciously or unconsciously constructed.
- Other key figures in the report:
 - 52% perceive Islam as a threat - one of the highest figures in Europe
 - 32% think the practice of the Islamic faith should be restricted
 - A doubling of requests for counseling by Muslims due to discrimination on the basis of Muslim identity since 2018
 - 90% of German-language films studied show negative references to Islam

- Hardly any media coverage of violence directed against Muslims, while negative coverage of Islam and of violence perpetrated by Muslims emphasises supposedly religious factors in the acts
- Schoolbooks are dominated by negative portrayals of Muslims, while Islamophobia is not addressed in any of the 348 German curricula.
- Another report published shortly before on Islamophobic attacks in Germany, "*Zivilgesellschaftliches Lagebild antimuslimischer Rassismus*", states that in 2022 there was an average of two Islamophobic incidents per day in Germany, although the number of unreported cases is assumed to be much higher.
- According to the report, there are more attacks by adults on children and young people; while Muslim women are more likely to be targeted than men
- The incidents occur in all areas of life, 20% of them in educational institutions, with the majority of the perpetrators being teachers.

New citizenship bill set to obstruct naturalisation process, with Muslims likely to be impacted

- The draft bill for a new citizenship law provides in §11.3 two obstacles to naturalisation, which in their intention are directly aimed at the Muslim community:
 - The prohibition of naturalisation in the case of existing multiple marriages, which was discussed exclusively with reference to polygynous marriages of Muslim men;
 - The prohibition on naturalisation in the case of disregard for the equal rights of men and women laid down in the constitution (Grundgesetz) - which, due to its lack of clear definition has the potential to be abused to the detriment of Muslim men, in view of the common prejudices about Islam and the relationship between men and women in Islam.

Counter-terrorism

Interior Minister meets with Tunisian President to discuss counter-terrorism cooperation

- During a visit of German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser to Tunisia, she discussed with Tunisian President Kais Saied and her Tunisian counterpart Kamel Fekih the joint fight against terrorism. Details were not disclosed, but an already ongoing project of the German Federal Police in Tunis is likely to be part of it.
- In comparable cooperation agreements, such as with Morocco, the focus is on the exchange of expertise, material and technology procurement and investigative cooperation.
- The danger of such cooperation agreements with repressive governments can be seen in the example of Germany's cooperation with Saudi Arabia.

According to the Guardian, the German Federal Police were among the instructors of the Saudi forces who are accused of the "deliberate mass killing" of refugees at the border to Yemen.

EU Commission demands that Germany properly implement EU counter-terror directives

- In July, the EU Commission published its decision on an ongoing infringement procedure against Germany, calling on the country to fully implement EU counter-terrorism directives.

According to them, Germany has not yet fully transposed some provisions on the punishability of terrorist acts into national law and now has two months to make improvements.

As of writing, no measures for implementation have been announced by the German government.