



Report

German Left-Wing Crime Increase Adds to Public Security Concerns

An increase in crime and attacks on police officers by German left-wing extremists in 2009 was centered in Berlin and Hamburg, cities which also have seen conflicts with immigrants. Despite initial preventative measures by federal and regional authorities, calls for stronger action continue.

Left-Wing Crime Increase Compounds Concern About Right-Wing, Immigrant Groups

German security authorities reported a substantial increase in crime and attacks on police in 2009 related to left-wing political groups and individuals, whom German counterintelligence agencies number at approximately 6,600.¹ This increase in left-wing crime represents an additional concern alongside Germany's perceived problems with right-wing extremist and immigrant crime (dw-world.de, 19 January).

- According to Germany's Interior Ministry, more extremist crimes and acts of violence occurred in 2009 than in any year since 2001. The ministry reported that in 2009, left-wing extremist crimes increased by almost 40% to 9,375. Violent crimes by these individuals and groups, meanwhile, increased by more than 50% to 1,822,² and the number of leftist attacks on police officers increased by 120% to 1,350³ (*Bild*, 23 March; bild.de, 30 January).
- Interior Ministry statistics indicate that although violent crimes tied to right-wing groups decreased by 14% to 959, overall crime by these groups is still twice as frequent as that committed by their left-wing counterparts.⁴ The Federal Office of Criminal Investigation (BKA) also reported that rightist attacks on police officers increased by almost 75% to 530⁵ (*Bild*, 23 March; bild.de, 30 January).
- Germany lacks publicly available official data on immigrant crime, but media reports reflect increasing concern about integration problems.^a For example, media have cited statistics -- probably drawn from a controversial lecture by Senior Public Prosecutor Roman Reusch, former head of the Berlin Department for Multiple Offenders⁶ -- indicating that 80% of young multiple offenders in Berlin have a migration background⁷ (meideu.de, 16 October 2009; *Focus*, 12 October 2009).

^a For more information, see the 29 December 2009 OSC Analysis, **Swiss Minaret Referendum Sparks Political Debate in Germany** (EUF20091229493001).

Left-Wing Crime Concentrated in Berlin, Hamburg

A review of media reports citing law enforcement officials demonstrates that the focal points for current and potential future leftist-related crime are the cities of Berlin and Hamburg.

- The Berlin intelligence service chief called his city the "German stronghold of left-wing extremism," noting 2,200 resident radical individuals, 950 of whom are "autonomous" leftist anarchists.⁸ According to the police, the number of leftist crimes in Berlin doubled to 1,300 in 2009.⁹ This [website](#) of a Berlin businessman uses police data to show arson attacks on cars, almost half of which were credited to leftist influence in 2009¹⁰ (taz.de, 20 November 2009; focus.de, 1 January; taz.de, 20 November 2009).
- Hamburg statistics show that "politically motivated leftist violence" increased by 40% to 699 crimes in 2009¹¹ (*Hamburger Abendblatt*, 18 January).
- After 13 attacks on police stations in 2009, the BKA reported "increased danger" for Berlin and Hamburg police stations, where the leftist-militant scene "is particularly pronounced"¹² (bild.de, 21 December 2009).



This OSC-created Google map provides details on areas of Berlin particularly affected by crime. To view the interactive Google map, click [here](#).

Despite Initial Steps, More Action Demanded

Federal and local government officials have initiated measures to combat left-wing extremism.

- Youth Minister Kristina Koehler agreed to provide 2 million euros (\$2.7 million) to fund projects against left-wing extremism and Islamism, which, in her opinion, had been "systematically played down, pushed away, and made a taboo" by former German ruling coalition member Social Democratic Party (SPD)¹³ (*Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 20 January).
- At the request of Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere, Germany's Federal Official for the Protection of the Constitution and the BKA are focused on "increased analysis" of extreme-left violent crimes, including the "clarification" of existing militant structures¹⁴ (taz.de, 31 March).
- Criminal investigators in Berlin and Hamburg have agreed to cooperate,¹⁵ and a May conference for city interior ministers in Hamburg will address arson attacks on vehicles¹⁶ (*Berliner Morgenpost*, 20 December 2009; *Die Welt*, 24 March).

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- In November 2009, the North Rhine-Westphalian (NRW) Interior Ministry produced an educational comic book on left-wing extremism to teach students "how left-wing extremists subvert basic democratic values and use violence" to pursue their goals,¹⁷ echoing two earlier comics about right-wing and Islamic extremism^{b c} (im.nrw.de, 23 November 2009).

Website Launched Against Left-Wing Extremism, Violence

In July 2009, Marco Kanne -- who founded the German libertarian political blog *opponent.de*¹⁹ and created a popular *YouTube* video opposing the German Left Party²⁰ -- launched another website to publicize the problem of left-wing violence (*opponent.de*, 6 March; *YouTube.com*, 13 August 2007).



- The *Information and Documentation Center Against Left-Wing Extremism and Violence (IDS)* website claims that it is designed to "bring attention to the frequently underestimated danger...of left-wing extremism and violence."²¹ The site -- which is promoted on German anti-Islam and other anti-leftist blogs^{22 23} -- offers an online form to report acts of left-wing violence and intimidation, which *IDS* claims to use to provide "comprehensive reports and analyses"²⁴ (*IDS*, 17 March; *Vaterland*, 20 June 2009; *Politically Incorrect*, 12 July 2009; *IDS*, 17 March).

An *IDS* website banner reads "What do you do, when they do it? Civil courage against left-wing extremism and violence"¹⁸ (*ids-online.de*, 17 March).

Officials continue to urge tougher laws and preventive measures against left-wing crime.

- Calling the left-wing crime data a "wake-up call," De Maiziere recommended that laws be strengthened against such crimes and stipulated that "no-go areas" -- or neighborhoods where militants or gangs prevented emergency officials' access -- would not be permitted. He also called on civil society to "play its part" in helping to counteract extremist views and actions²⁵ (*Die Welt*, 24 March).
- An SPD domestic policy expert criticized the government's insufficient funding of counterextremism programs, assessing that approximately 40 million euros (\$53.2 million) would be needed to combat left-wing and right-wing extremism "equally effectively."²⁶ The chairman of the Christian Social Union deputies called for "dropout

^b For more information, see the 28 October 2008 OSC Analysis, **German Anti-Islamist Comic Seen as Good Effort, Impact Uncertain** (EUF20081028496002).

^c For more information, see the 25 February OSC Translation, **Germany's North Rhine-Westphalia Produces Islamist Education Materials** (EUP20100225366001).

and social worker programs" to do away with left-wing extremism.²⁷ In contrast, a Free Democratic Party deputy urged further analysis of leftist activity before spending extra money, noting that officials should not assume that tactics that worked in dealing with neo-Nazis would also work with violent leftists (*Neue OZ*, 24 March; *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 18 January; dw-world.de, 24 March).

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¹ [OSC | EUP20100119072007 | | 19 January 2010 | | German Government Sets Sights on Left-Wing and Islamist Extremism - Windows Internet Explorer | | (U) | (U) | Bonn DW-WORLD.DE in English -- Website of Deutsche Welle, Germany's international broadcaster, carrying out its "legally defined mission while remaining journalistically independent"; URL: www.dw-world.de]

² [OSC | EUP20100323085021 | | 23 March 2010 | | Germany: More on Politically Motivated Violence in 2009 - Windows Internet Explorer | | (U) | (U) | Hamburg Bild in German -- popular tabloid daily leaning right of center]

³ [Online Publication | | bild.de | | 30 January 2010 | | <http://www.bild.de/BILD/Newsticker/news-ticker/2010/01/30/14-linker-terror.html> | 23 February 2010 | Hamburg Bild.de in German -- Website of Bild, popular tabloid daily leaning right of center; URL: <http://www.bild.de>]

⁴ [OSC | EUP20100323085021 | | 23 March 2010 | | Germany: More on Politically Motivated Violence in 2009 - Windows Internet Explorer | | (U) | (U) | Hamburg Bild in German -- popular tabloid daily leaning right of center]

⁵ [Online Publication | | bild.de | | 30 January 2010 | | <http://www.bild.de/BILD/Newsticker/news-ticker/2010/01/30/14-linker-terror.html> | 23 February 2010 | Hamburg Bild.de in German -- Website of Bild, popular tabloid daily leaning right of center; URL: <http://www.bild.de>]

⁶ [Internet Site | | Meinungsfreiheit und Demokratie | | 16 October 2009 | | <http://www.meideu.de/roman-reusch/der-vortrag> | 26 April 2010 | Berlin Meinungsfreiheit und Demokratie -- Website of Berlin Deputy Rene Stadtkewitz; URL: <http://www.meideu.de>]

⁷ [Magazine Article | | Focus | | 12 October 2009 | | 13 October 2009 | Munich Focus in German -- centrist weekly news magazine]

⁸ [Online Publication | | taz.de | | 20 November 2009 | | <http://www.taz.de/1/politik/deutschland/artikel/1/die-neue-rote-gefahr/> | 30 November 2009 | Berlin taz.de in German -- Website of Die Tageszeitung, a leftist daily, with links to the Greens; URL: <http://www.taz.de>]

⁹ [Online Publication | | focus.de | | 1 January 2010 | | http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/extremismus-berliner-linksextreme-greifen-polizei-an_aid_467227.html | 26 January 2010 | Munich Focus Online in Germany - - News website funded by the Focus Group; which funds Focus weekly and Focus-TV; URL: <http://www.focus.de>]

¹⁰ [Online Publication | | taz.de | | 20 November 2009 | | <http://www.taz.de/1/politik/deutschland/artikel/1/die-neue-rote-gefahr/> | 30 November 2009 | Berlin taz.de in German -- Website of Die Tageszeitung, a leftist daily, with links to the Greens; URL: <http://www.taz.de>]

¹¹ [Online Publication | | Hamburger Abendblatt | | 18 January 2010 | | <http://www.abendblatt.de/politik/deutschland/article1345856/CSU-setzt-auf-Aussteigerprogramm.html> | 25 March 2010 | Hamburg Hamburger Abendblatt in German -- Website of Hamburger Abendblatt, a regional daily; URL: www.abendblatt.de]

¹² [OSC | EUP20091221072004 | | 21 December 2009 | | Germany: Attacks on Police Reported - Windows Internet Explorer | | (U) | (U) | Hamburg Bild.de in German -- Website of Bild, popular tabloid daily leaning right of center; URL: <http://www.bild.de>]

¹³ [OSC | EUP20100120085032 | | 20 January 2010 | | German Youth Ministry Allocates Funds to Combating Leftwing Extremism, Islamism - Windows Internet Explorer | | (U) | (U) | Frankfurt/Main Frankfurter Allgemeine in German -- influential, independent, nationwide daily; leans right-of-center]

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- ¹⁴ [Online Publication | | taz.de | | 31 March 2010 | | <http://www.taz.de/1/politik/deutschland/artikel/1/linke-als-zielgruppe-wiederentdeckt/> | 31 March 2010 | Berlin taz.de in German -- Website of Die Tageszeitung, a leftist daily, with links to the Greens; URL: <http://www.taz.de>]
- ¹⁵ [Online Publication | | Berliner Morgenpost | | 20 December 2009 | | <http://www.morgenpost.de/berlin-aktuell/article1226337/Berlin-kaempft-mit-Hamburg-gegen-linke-Gewalt.html> | 11 March 2010 | Berlin Berliner Morgenpost in German -- Website of Berliner Morgenpost, a regional daily; URL: <http://www.morgenpost.de>]
- ¹⁶ [OSC | EUP20100324085006 | | 24 March 2010 | | Germany's de Maiziere Argues Civil Society Must Ostracize Assaults on Police - Windows Internet Explorer | | (U) | (U) | Berlin Die Welt in German -- major right-of-center daily]
- ¹⁷ [Internet Site | | www.im.nrw.de | Neuer Bildungscomic gegen Linksextremismus - Innenminister Wolf: Politisch aufgeklärte Jugendliche sind Fundament und Zukunft unserer Demokratie | 23 November 2009 | | http://www.im.nrw.de/pm/231109_1700.html | 23 March 2010 |]
- ¹⁸ [Internet Site | | ids-online.de | Linksextremen Vorfall Melden | 17 March 2010 | | <http://ids-online.de/melden/?PHPSESSID=04ce9b89981978ed828d5ae79f06d4f3> | 17 March 2010 |]
- ¹⁹ [Internet Site | | opponent.de | Ueber diesen Blog | 6 March 2010 | | <http://opponent.de/> | 17 March 2010 |]
- ²⁰ [Internet Site | | YouTube.com | Die Linke: Eine Bedrohung unserer Freiheit | 13 August 2007 | | http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-eHdIPofVc&feature=Playlist&p=159DE3344AE78658&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=12 | 17 March 2010 |]
- ²¹ [Internet Site | | ids-online.de | Ueber uns-Wer wir sind und was wir wollen | 17 March 2010 | | <http://ids-online.de/ueber-uns/?PHPSESSID=04ce9b89981978ed828d5ae79f06d4f3> | 17 March 2010 |]
- ²² [Internet Site | | Vaterland | Gründung des IDS | 20 June 2009 | | <http://www.deutschland-kontrovers.net/?p=11268> | 17 March 2010 |] Comment Section: 2 Marco am 20 Jun 2009 um 20:38
- ²³ [Internet Site | | pi-news.net | Kampf gegen Links hat begonnen | 12 July 2009 | | <http://www.pi-news.net/2009/07/kampf-gegen-links-hat-begonnen/> | 17 March 2010 |]
- ²⁴ [Internet Site | | ids-online.de | Linksextremen Vorfall melden | 17 March 2010 | | <http://ids-online.de/melden/?PHPSESSID=04ce9b89981978ed828d5ae79f06d4f3> | 17 March 2010 |]
- ²⁵ [OSC | EUP20100324085006 | | 24 March 2010 | | Germany's de Maiziere Argues Civil Society Must Ostracize Assaults on Police - Windows Internet Explorer | | (U) | (U) | Berlin Die Welt in German -- major right-of-center daily]
- ²⁶ [Online Publication | | Neue OZ | | 24 March 2010 | | http://www.neue-oz.de/information/noz_print/interviews/20100323-SPD-Kampf-gegen-Extremismus-massiv-verstaerken.html | 25 March 2010 | Osnabrueck Neue OZ in German -- Website of Neue Osnabruecker Zeitung, a regional daily; URL: <http://www.neue-oz.de>]
- ²⁷ [Online Publication | | Hamburger Abendblatt | | 18 January 2010 | | <http://www.abendblatt.de/politik/deutschland/article1345856/CSU-setzt-auf-Aussteigerprogramm.html> | 25 March 2010 | Hamburg Hamburger Abendblatt in German -- Website of Hamburger Abendblatt, a regional daily; URL: www.abendblatt.de]

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