

GERMANY 2022 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

The constitution prohibits religious discrimination and provides for freedom of faith and conscience and the practice of one's religion. The law prohibits calling for violence, inciting hatred or taking arbitrary measures against religious groups or their members, or defaming religious groups. The country's 16 states exercise considerable autonomy on registration of religious groups. Unrecognized religious groups are ineligible for tax benefits. The law permits the federal government to characterize "nontraditional" religious groups as "sects" and to provide "accurate information" or warnings about them to the public.

During the year, courts convicted a police officer assigned to protect Jewish institutions of inciting hatred; authorities found a swastika flag in his apartment. They also convicted a former army officer found with Nazi and other antisemitic materials, firearms, and explosives in his home of planning attacks against senior officials and a Jewish human rights activist. Federal and state domestic intelligence services continued to monitor the activities of numerous Muslim groups and mosques with ties to Islamist groups, and the Church of Scientology (COS). Many state and federal politicians called for closure of the Islamic Center Hamburg (IZH), which the government regarded as "the most important representation of Iran in Germany besides the Iranian embassy." North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) banned a mosque in Dortmund for opposing the constitutional order, and authorities in six states searched multiple properties connected to a mosque in Bad Kreuznach suspected of ties to a banned Islamist group, making three arrests and seizing weapons, data, and hundreds of thousands of euros. Certain states continued to ban or restrict the use of religious clothing or symbols by some state employees. The federal Military Rabbinate expanded from one to three chaplains, but the Ministry of Defense, citing continuing obstacles, had still not appointed any imams as chaplains. Jehovah's Witnesses said authorities in multiple cities restricted or banned their public use of display carts with religious literature. Ahmadi Muslims said officials and judges in asylum proceedings often expressed skepticism about Ahmadi individuals' professions of faith or disregarded concerns that they could not practice their faith openly in their homeland.

Several states initiated programs to educate the public about antisemitism and set up mechanisms for victims to report incidents of antisemitism. Senior government leaders condemned antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred. In September, Chancellor Olaf Scholz declared the fight against antisemitism, right-wing extremism, and racism was the country's "top priority." On November 30, the government released its *National Strategy against Antisemitism and for Jewish Life*.

There were numerous reports of antisemitic, anti-Muslim, and anti-Christian incidents, including assaults, verbal harassment, threats, discrimination, vandalism, and demonstrations. Preliminary Ministry of Interior crime statistics for 2022 cited 2,639 antisemitic crimes, a 12.8 percent decrease from 2021. Of the antisemitic crimes, 88 involved violence, a 37.5 percent increase over 2021. The ministry registered 662 anti-Muslim and 109 anti-Christian crimes in 2021 (the latest year for which such figures were available), a decrease of 28.7 percent and 22.7 percent, respectively, from the previous year. It classified most perpetrators of anti-Muslim crimes as right-wing extremists but indicated that perpetrators of crimes against Christians came from different camps.

A poll released in May showed that more than half of the country's population believed antisemitism was a widespread and worsening problem. A plurality blamed right-wing extremists for spreading antisemitism, although Muslim respondents were more likely to blame anti-Israel sentiment than the general population. There were multiple cases during the year of assaults against Muslim women wearing headscarves; according to a report commissioned by the Berlin state government, there was "virulent" discrimination in the state's public agencies against women who wore headscarves. Representatives of the Jewish community continued to warn of the connection between COVID-19 conspiracy theories, right-wing extremist groups, and antisemitism. There were multiple cases of vandalism during the year against churches, Jewish cemeteries, mosques, and Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Halls.

The U.S. embassy and the five consulates general continued to engage closely with all levels of government regarding responses to incidents of religious intolerance. The embassy and consulates general worked closely with Jewish communities to support programs promoting religious tolerance and countering violent extremism related to religion and antisemitism. The Ambassador regularly highlighted her family's history of fleeing religious

persecution to promote religious freedom and tolerance and point out society's responsibility to act against threats to religious freedom. In December, the U.S. Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues visited Berlin and met with leading government officials responsible for holocaust remembrance, education, and restitution as well as officials combating antisemitism. The embassy utilized virtual programs to promote accurate Holocaust narratives and promoted religious tolerance via social media, highlighting the engagement of the Ambassador and senior embassy officials on the issue.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 84.3 million (midyear 2022). Unofficial estimates based on the 2011 census (the most recent for which data are available), civil registers, and figures provided by religious groups indicate approximately 26 percent of the population is Roman Catholic and 24 percent belongs to the Evangelical Church in Germany ("EKD" in German) – a confederation of Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinist), and United (Prussian Union) Protestant regional churches. Other Protestant denominations, including the New Apostolic Church, Baptist communities, and nondenominational Christians, account for approximately 2.1 percent of the population. Orthodox Christians represent 2 percent of the population.

According to government estimates published in 2021, approximately 6.6 percent of the population is Muslim, of which 74 percent is Sunni, 8 percent Alevi, 4 percent Shia, 1 percent Ahmadi, and 1 percent other affiliations such as Alawites and Sufis. The remaining 12 percent of Muslims in the country say they are not affiliated with any of the above groups or are unwilling to disclose an affiliation. Intelligence officials estimate there are approximately 11,900 Salafi Muslims in the country. Estimates of the Jewish population vary widely; the Jewish community counted 91,813 dues-paying members at the end of 2021. The Federal Ministry of the Interior estimates there are 95,000 Jews, while other estimates place the number at approximately 225,000 when including Jews who do not belong to a specific Jewish community.

According to the secular nongovernmental organization (NGO) Religious Studies Media and Information Service (REMID), Buddhists (300,000); Jehovah's Witnesses (169,272); Hindus (100,000); Yezidis (100,000); members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Church of Jesus Christ) (39,724); Sikhs (25,000); and members of the COS (3,500) together constitute less than 1 percent of the population. All of REMID's estimates are based on

members who have registered with a religious group. According to the nonprofit Research Group Worldviews Germany, approximately 39 percent of the population either has no religious affiliation or belongs to religious groups not counted in government statistics.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal Framework

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on religious opinion and provides for freedom of faith and conscience, freedom to profess a religious or philosophical creed, and freedom to practice one's religion. It also prohibits an official state church. It stipulates no one shall be required to disclose his or her religious convictions or be compelled to participate in religious acts. The constitution states religious instruction shall be part of the curriculum in public schools, and parents have the right to decide whether their children receive religious instruction. It recognizes the right to establish private denominational schools. The constitution guarantees the freedom to form religious societies and permits groups to organize themselves for private religious purposes without constraint. It allows registered religious groups with public law corporation (PLC) status to receive public subsidies from the states and to provide religious services in the military, hospitals, and prisons.

A federal law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

The federal criminal code prohibits calling for violence, inciting hatred, or taking arbitrary measures against religious groups or their members. Violations are punishable by up to five years in prison. It also prohibits "assaulting the human dignity of religious groups or their members by insulting, maliciously maligning, or defaming them," specifying a maximum penalty of five years in prison, although prison sentences are rare. The prohibition and penalties apply equally to online speech. In addition, the federal criminal code prohibits insulting a domestic religious organization, its institutions or practices, or the religious beliefs or world views of another person, if doing so could disturb the public peace. Violations are punishable by a fine or up to three years in prison but are rarely prosecuted. The federal criminal code prohibits disturbing religious services or acts of worship, with violators subject to a fine or imprisonment for up to three years. The law bans

Nazi propaganda, Holocaust denial, and fomenting racial hatred, specifying a penalty of up to five years' imprisonment.

By law, social media companies with more than two million registered users in the country must implement procedures to review complaints and remove or block access to illegal speech within seven days of receiving a complaint and within 24 hours for cases considered "manifestly unlawful." Noncompliance may result in fines of up to €50 million (\$53.4 million). Unlawful content includes actions illegal under the criminal code, such as defamation of religions and denial of historic atrocities.

The law permits the federal government to characterize "nontraditional" religious groups – such as the COS – as "sects," "youth religions," and "youth sects" and allows the government to provide "accurate information" or warnings about them to the public. The law does not permit the government to use terms such as "destructive," "pseudo-religious," or "manipulative" when referring to these groups. Several past court decisions ruled that the government must remain neutral toward a religion and may provide a warning to the public only if an "offer" by a religious group would endanger the basic rights of an individual or place the individual in a state of physical or financial dependence.

Religious groups wishing to qualify as nonprofit associations with tax-exempt status must register. State-level authorities review registration submissions and routinely grant tax-exempt status; if challenged, their decisions are subject to judicial review. Those applying for tax-exempt status must provide evidence they are a religious group through their statutes, history, and activities.

A special partnership exists between the states and religious groups with PLC status, as outlined in the constitution. Any religious group may request PLC status, which, if granted, entitles the group to levy tithes (8 percent of income tax in Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg, 9 percent in the other states) on members, who must register their religious affiliation with federal tax authorities. Each state collects the tithes on behalf of the religious community through the state's tax collection process, separately from and in addition to income taxes. PLCs pay fees to the government for the tithing service, but not all groups with PLC status utilize the service. PLC status also allows for benefits, including tax exemptions (larger than those given to groups with nonprofit status), representation on supervisory boards of public television and radio stations, and the right to special labor regulations. State governments

subsidize institutions with PLC status that provide public services, such as religious schools and hospitals. In addition, due to historic “state-church contracts” dating back to before 1919, all state governments except Bremen and Hamburg subsidize the Catholic Church and the EKD with different yearly amounts.

According to the constitution, the decision to grant PLC status is made at the state level. Individual states base PLC status decisions on a number of varying qualifications, including an assurance of the group’s permanence, size, and respect for the constitutional order and fundamental rights of individuals. An estimated 180 religious groups have PLC status, including Catholics, the EKD, Alevi Muslims, Baha’is, Baptists, Christian Scientists, Hindus, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Jews, Mennonites, Methodists, Church of Jesus Christ, Salvation Army, and Seventh-day Adventists. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat has PLC status in the states of Hesse and Hamburg; no other Muslim communities other than the Alevis have PLC status. The COS does not have PLC or nonprofit status in any state.

Federal animal protection laws prohibit the killing of animals without anesthesia, including as part of halal and kosher slaughter practices. Pursuant to a Federal Administrative Court decision, however, trained personnel may kill animals without anesthesia in a registered slaughterhouse under observation of the local veterinary inspection office if the meat is for consumption only by members of religious communities whose beliefs require slaughtering animals without anesthesia.

Federal law enables authorities to restrict the tattoos, clothing, jewelry, and hair or beard styles of civil servants if this is necessary to ensure the functionality of public administration or fulfill the obligation for respectful and trustworthy conduct. The law specifies that if these symbols are of a religious nature, they may only be restricted if they are “objectively suited to adversely affecting trust in a civil servant’s neutral performance of his official duties.”

According to a ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court, general headscarf bans for teachers at public schools violate religious freedom, but implementation is left to the states, which may determine if special circumstances apply. The states of Bavaria and NRW do not have strict guidelines; authorities render decisions on a case-by-case basis. Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Bremen, Saxony, Thuringia, and Lower Saxony do not prohibit headscarves for teachers. Hesse and Saarland permit teachers to

wear headscarves as long as doing so does not impair “school peace” or threaten perceptions of state neutrality. Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Wuerttemberg prohibit teachers from wearing full-face veils (i.e., niqabs or burqas). Berlin bans visible signs of religious affiliation for police, lawyers, judges, and law enforcement staff but not for primary and secondary school teachers. In Lower Saxony and Bavaria, judges and prosecutors may not wear religious symbols or clothing in the courtroom. Other states have laws that restrict religious attire in certain circumstances.

Citing safety reasons and the need for traffic law enforcement, federal law prohibits the concealment of faces while driving, including by a niqab. Infractions are punishable by a €60 (\$64) fine.

State law in Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Wuerttemberg forbids students in primary and secondary schools from full-face veiling at school (i.e., wearing a niqab or burqa). This state ban on full-face covering does not apply in higher education. According to federal law, religious groups may appoint individuals with special training to carry out circumcision of males younger than six months. After six months, the law states circumcisions must be performed in a “medically professional manner” and without unnecessary pain.

All states offer religious instruction and ethics courses in public schools. Religious communities with PLC status (or those without such status that have concluded a special agreement with the state granting them this right) appoint religion teachers and work with the states to ensure the curriculum is in line with the constitution; the states pay the teachers’ salaries. Most public schools offer the option of Protestant and Catholic religious instruction in cooperation with those churches, as well as instruction in Judaism if enough students (usually at least 12, although regulations vary by state) express an interest. Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Berlin, Hesse, Lower Saxony, NRW, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, and Schleswig-Holstein also offer some religious instruction in Islam. In most federal states, Muslim communities or associations provide this instruction, while in Bavaria and Schleswig-Holstein, the state does. In Bremen, the state offers nondenominational religious instruction for all students. In Hamburg, since the start of the 2022-23 school year in August, the state has offered nondenominational religious instruction for all students in consultation with the Catholic Church, EKD, the Jewish community, and several Muslim associations; previously the EKD provided this instruction.

Students who do not wish to participate in religious instruction may opt out; in some states, those who opt out may substitute ethics courses. State authorities generally permit religious groups to establish private schools as long as they meet basic curriculum requirements. Schooling is constitutionally mandated, and homeschooling, including for religious reasons, is prohibited in all states.

A Bavarian state government decree requires state government agencies to display a crucifix in the entrances of their public buildings.

The government provides annual payments to Holocaust victims and their descendants, and regularly expands the scope of these programs to broaden the eligibility requirements.

The country is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Government Practices

The television news program *Hessenschau* reported that on January 11, the Wetzlar Administrative Court found a police officer assigned to guard Jewish institutions in Frankfurt guilty of inciting hatred for sharing extremist materials online, including videos and photographs of Hitler, and for illegally possessing a firearm and ammunition. The court sentenced him to 16 months' probation and ordered him to pay a €1,200 (\$1,300) fine to the Frankfurt-based Anne Frank Education Center. Police also found a swastika flag in his apartment while executing a search warrant; authorities immediately dismissed the officer from the police force.

In a February press release, the Karlsruhe public prosecutor's office reported it charged two campaign workers from the Baden-Württemberg branch of the Die Rechte (The Right) party with incitement to hatred for driving a vehicle decorated with posters featuring a well-known Holocaust denier and the slogan "Israel is our misfortune – put an end to it" to the Pforzheim Synagogue, where they played a speech by the Holocaust denier over loudspeakers mounted on the vehicle. The incident took place during the 2019 European Parliament elections. The prosecutor's office said the two suspects intended to generate hate and encourage violence against the country's Jews. No trial date was set by year's end.

The *Jerusalem Post* reported that on July 15, a Frankfurt court found Franco A., a former military officer, guilty of possessing firearms, ammunition, and explosives, and planning attacks on high-ranking government officials and a prominent Jewish human rights activist. The lead justice said Franco A. had a “hardened far-right, extremist, ethno-nationalist, and especially racist and antisemitic mindset.” According to the *Jerusalem Post*, throughout his trial, Franco A. made statements admiring a well-known German Holocaust denier. He also kept Nazi paraphernalia in his home and recordings of conversations during which he praised Adolph Hitler, discussed antisemitic conspiracy theories, and said immigration had “ruined Germany’s ethnic purity.” The court sentenced him to five-and-a-half years in prison. He had been detained since his arrest in 2017.

According to *Hessenschau*, on July 29, Frankfurt prosecutors and the Hesse State Criminal Police Office launched an investigation of five Frankfurt police officers, including three supervisors, for sharing right-wing extremist material, including Nazi symbols, in online chat forums. Authorities suspended the officers pending the results of the investigation.

The *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (WAZ) newspaper reported that as of September, investigations regarding right-wing chat networks among police in Muelheim, NRW, where chat members shared anti-Muslim content in 2021, were ongoing. Authorities suspended 20 officers.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper reported that on March 10, the NRW Ministry of Interior banned the Dortmund-based mosque Nuralislam for opposing the constitutional order and the “idea of international understanding.” According to the news outlet, the mosque had played an “important role” in recruiting ISIS members and had ties to the leader of ISIS within the country.

NTV News reported that on 28 June, authorities in the Rhineland-Palatinate and five other states searched 50 properties connected to a mosque in Bad Kreuznach, Rhineland-Palatinate that authorities suspected of spreading the ideology of the banned Islamist group Caliphate State in sermons and through the sale of writings and other means of propaganda. Authorities arrested three suspects on charges of membership in a prohibited organization and disseminating propaganda opposing the country’s constitutional order. During the searches, police seized firearms, knives and sabers, data storage media, and hundreds of thousands of euros.

Federal and state Offices for the Protection of the Constitution (OPC), the domestic intelligence services, continued to monitor numerous Muslim groups, including the U.S.-designated terrorist groups ISIS, Hizballah, and Hamas, as well as groups such as Turkish Hizballah, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Tablighi Jama'at, Millatu Ibrahim, IZH, Muslim Brotherhood, Milli Gorus, and various Salafist movements. The OPC in Saxony reported it continued to monitor two mosques in Leipzig and Plauen it said were dominated by Salafists.

The federal OPC characterized the IZH as “the most important representation of Iran in Germany besides the Iranian embassy and an important propaganda center of Iran in Europe,” through which the Iranian state sought to “bind Shiites of various nationalities to itself” and “spread its basic social, political and religious values” in Europe. An IZH court case challenging this characterization was still pending at year’s end. The IZH remained a member of the Shura, a council of Muslim organizations in Hamburg. The Shura continued to be the Hamburg state government’s partner for dialogue and cooperation with the entire Muslim community per a formal agreement that the state was reviewing at year’s end. On June 17, the state government confirmed it had revoked the residence permit of the IZH’s deputy chairman, Seyed Soleiman Mousavifar, for illegal activities incompatible with his status; he left the country November 3. In October, the *Hamburger Abendblatt* newspaper reported that several members of the Hamburg legislature and the country’s parliament called for the government to close the IZH and opposition parties Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU) introduced federal legislation to this effect. On October 20, Hamburg Deputy Mayor Katharina Fegebank said, “The IZH is the antithesis of our free democratic basic order.”

According to reports from the federal OPC and COS members, the federal OPC and the OPCs of six states – Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony, NRW, and Saxony-Anhalt – continued to monitor the activities of the COS, reportedly by evaluating COS publications and members’ public activities to determine whether they violated the constitution. At least four major political parties – the CDU, CSU, Social Democratic Party, and Free Democratic Party – continued to exclude Scientologists from party membership.

“Sect filters,” i.e., signed statements by potential employees to confirm they had no contact with the COS, remained in use in the public and private sectors.

Bitter Winter, an online magazine that covers human rights issues, reported that on April 6, the Federal Administrative Court upheld a state appeals court ruling that the Munich city government violated a COS member's constitutional rights of equality before the law and freedom of religion when it insisted she sign a sect filter with her application for a €500 (\$530) municipal electric bicycle subsidy for which she was otherwise qualified. According to *Bitter Winter*, "Although the case was not about 'sect filters' in general, the court's view seems to indicate that in the absence of a proper law, demanding a declaration of a person's belief is unconstitutional per se."

Groups under OPC observation continued to say OPC scrutiny implied they were extremist and that this constrained their ability to apply for publicly funded projects.

Media outlets reported that on July 27, Hamburg's Higher Regional (district) Court sentenced Jalda A, a Bremen woman married to an ISIS fighter, to five-and-a-half years in prison for, among other crimes, keeping a Yazidi woman as a slave for three weeks when Jalda A. lived in Syria with her husband.

The *Rheinische Post* newspaper reported that in September, the NRW state government told the Cologne University of Catholic Theology (CUCT), which is owned and funded by the Catholic Archdiocese of Cologne, to stop training priests who enrolled after the 2019/20 winter semester. The state government argued that under a 1929 contract between it and the Vatican, all priests trained in the archdiocese must be educated at the state-funded University of Bonn and that the state's 2020 accreditation of CUCT was only intended to allow students then enrolled at CUCT to complete their educations.

On September 15, the government and the Claims Conference announced they had reached an agreement to provide additional compensation to Holocaust survivors. The government agreed to pay €1.3 billion (\$1.4 billion), mostly for health care for elderly survivors around the world and including €12 million (\$12.9 million) in emergency assistance for the 8,500 Jewish survivor refugees remaining in Ukraine. The government also committed to investing nearly €100 million (\$106.8 million) towards Holocaust education for the next three years. Chancellor Scholtz said supporting Holocaust education was gaining importance as fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors were alive to tell their stories. Finance Minister Christian Lindner said, "We bear no individual guilt today, but we have a moral obligation and a historic responsibility for what

was done in the name of Germany and the name of the German people.... Our responsibility is also to preserve the memory of the Shoah.”

On November 30, the government released its *National Strategy against Antisemitism and for Jewish Life*. The strategy emphasized five main areas of intervention: data collection, preventive education, boosting Holocaust commemoration, stiffer penalties for antisemitic offenders, and overall awareness of Jewish history and culture.

Bremen remained the only state in the country without an antisemitism commissioner. Representatives of the Jewish community in Bremen said the community preferred to address antisemitism and other issues of concern in an existing forum that included the mayor and president of the legislature.

The Federal Ministry of Research and Education reported it provided €12 million (\$12.8 million) in funding to research projects and networks across the country during the year through its “Current Dynamics and Challenges of Antisemitism” initiative. Projects funded included a study on the role of the justice system in combating antisemitism, an examination of how to convey knowledge about Jewish culture to the public, and a project to help teachers and police officers counter antisemitism.

On April 1, the state of Hesse issued a press release announcing the launch of an online platform to counter antisemitism. The site included information and research sources, as well as an antisemitic hate crime report form and contact information for additional assistance. Hessian Interior Minister Peter Beuth said of the site, “From now on, antisemitism can be specifically recorded, analyzed, documented, and thus also combated below the threshold of criminal liability. The message of the state government is clear: discrimination and exclusion have no place, but our Jewish fellow citizens have a firm place in our country. Attacks against Jewish life are always an attack on our democratic and cosmopolitan society.”

Public broadcaster WDR reported that on April 12, the Research and Information Center on Antisemitism, NRW (RIAS NRW), based in Düsseldorf, started recording reports of antisemitic incidents, including those not categorized as crimes, and supporting victims. The North Rhine Association of Jewish Communities ran the independent center, which the NRW state government funded with €266,000 (\$284,000) annually.

On July 22, the government of Saxony-Anhalt announced the opening of the Reporting and Counseling Center for Antisemitism in Halle, operated by the NGO OFEK and funded by the state government. The center operated a hotline to document and analyze antisemitic incidents regardless of their level of criminality in order to have a complete record of the experiences of targeted individuals. Creating the center was part of the “State Program for Jewish life in Saxony-Anhalt and against Antisemitism,” which the state government passed in 2020.

WDR reported that in May, a trial court in Cologne fined Polish priest Dariusz Oko €3,000 (\$3,200) for an article he wrote in the Catholic magazine *Theologisches* in 2021 describing homosexuals as “parasites” and “cancerous ulcers” and saying homosexuals should not be admitted to the priesthood. The court also fined the magazine editor €4,000 (\$4,300).

Representatives of the Muslim community continued to call upon the Ministry of Defense to provide military chaplains for the estimated 3,000 Muslim members of the armed forces. The ministry stated the lack of an umbrella organization for Muslims with which the ministry could negotiate made it difficult to appoint imams as chaplains but that it would continue to seek a solution to the issue.

The military reported it added two additional Jewish chaplains during the year, bringing the total to three, with a goal of eventually appointing 10 rabbis to serve the 150-300 Jews in the armed forces. In July, the military cooperated with the Central Council of Jews to conduct a one-week training course for prospective Jewish chaplains and chaplains’ assistants. The military reported that in April, the Military Rabbinate cohosted Passover services with the Brody Synagogue in Leipzig, and in May, the rabbinate cohosted Sukkah services with the Rykestrasse Synagogue in Berlin.

Religious groups, including the Coordination Council of Muslims, whose members included the country’s largest Muslim organizations, expressed concern that authorities might restrict civil servants from wearing headscarves or other religious symbols under the federal law allowing authorities to restrict the display by civil servants of religious symbols if these are “objectively suited to adversely affecting trust in a civil servant’s neutral performance of his official duties.”

The WAZ reported that in January, St. Marien Hospital, a publicly owned hospital operated by a Catholic organization in Herne, NRW, fired a woman two weeks into a three-month internship for wearing a headscarf on duty. The woman said hospital management told her, "Either you take off your headscarf or you have to end your internship." Hospital management told the press that wearing a headscarf during working hours was prohibited under workplace rules, which required that employees maintain a neutral religious appearance towards patients. The intern said she was surprised at the dismissal, since she had worn a headscarf to her job interview. She told the WAZ, "I feel very discriminated against."

According to representatives of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, officials and judges in asylum proceedings often expressed skepticism about Ahmadi individuals' professions of faith or disregarded concerns that they could not practice their faith openly in their homeland. Representatives said this led to the deportations of several community members to Pakistan, where they faced persecution.

The Christian advocacy group Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) reported that in August, the European Court of Human Rights dismissed the case of "H.H.," an Iranian national and Christian convert who sought asylum in Germany, claiming he would be persecuted for his faith if he returned to Iran. The government denied his asylum claim. According to ADF, the Greifswald Administrative Court that rejected his appeal of a lower court ruling against him stated it was unconvinced H.H. had genuinely converted to Christianity. The London-based religious freedom NGO Article 18 reported H.H.'s pastor in Germany testified in writing, "Because of what I do at the church, and the experience I have with Christians from Iran, I personally believe that I can say that his testimony of him being a believer is trustworthy."

The weekly *Jüdische Allgemeine* reported that on August 24, Saxony-Anhalt Interior Minister Tamara Zieschang and State Chairperson of the Jewish Communities in Saxony-Anhalt Max Privorozki signed an agreement to establish a position of official rabbi to the state's police forces. The first official rabbi took office on September 1. The rabbi taught police trainees about Jewish life and traditions and provided chaplain services, among other responsibilities.

The *Catholic News Agency* reported that on August 31, the Mannheim Administrative Court ruled that silent prayer gatherings near an abortion

counselling facility in the city of Pforzheim, Baden-Württemberg State, could not be prohibited. A group called 40 Days for Life brought the case. The decision overturned a municipal ban on such gatherings issued in 2019 and upheld by a lower court in 2021. The Mannheim Administrative Court held that “authorities could only make an assembly dependent on such a condition if public safety would be directly endangered if the assembly were held. This was not the case here.”

The states of Schleswig-Holstein, Rhineland-Palatinate, NRW, Lower Saxony, Hesse, Hamburg, Bremen, Berlin, Bavaria, and Baden-Wuerttemberg provided chaplain services to Muslim prison inmates, according to figures published in 2021, the latest available. The states of Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt, Brandenburg, and Meckenburg-Vorpommern, where Muslims accounted for between 4 and 13 percent of prison inmates, did not offer Muslim chaplains. Catholic and Protestant chaplains were available to inmates throughout the country.

The magazine *Islam iQ* reported that on October 14, a muezzin at the Cologne Central Mosque issued the call to Friday prayers through a loudspeaker, the first mosque in the city to do so as part of a two-year pilot project implemented by Mayor Henriette Reker. The city government set parameters that the call to prayer may only occur between noon and 3 p.m., last a maximum of five minutes, and have the volume regulated. The magazine said approximately a dozen mosques in the country, including in Munich, Dueren (NRW), and Raunheim (Hesse), regularly issued calls to prayer using loudspeakers.

According to Jehovah’s Witnesses, authorities in multiple cities, including Fulda, Hamburg, and Munich, restricted or banned the group from using temporary display carts with Bible-based and other religious literature in public and issued fines to violators. Jehovah’s Witnesses said they were unable to set up literature displays in airports and train stations, and that police in several cities harassed Jehovah’s Witnesses using temporary display carts.

Jehovah’s Witnesses said when Ukrainian refugees who were Jehovah’s Witnesses began arriving in the country by train, authorities denied Jehovah’s Witnesses volunteers and spiritual counselors access to the Frankfurt, Munich, and Berlin train stations, while granting access to other religious groups.

On January 25, the Rhineland-Palatinate Higher Administrative Court confirmed a 2021 ruling by the Mainz Administrative Court that the state government's 2019 closure of the state's only Islamic kindergarten, the al-Nur Center in Mainz, was lawful. State authorities said the center was linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafist organizations. The court said the operators of the kindergarten had done nothing "to prevent the children cared for from slipping into a religiously influenced parallel society."

On May 31, the Hessen Administrative Court rejected an appeal by the State of Hesse and upheld a Wiesbaden Administrative Court 2021 ruling that the state government had unlawfully ended cooperation with the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs on denominational Islamic religious education in Hesse public schools in 2020. The State of Hesse resumed its cooperation in compliance with the court order in August. The Turkish-Islamic Union began offering Islamic religion classes in primary schools for the 2013-14 school year, but the government questioned whether the association was sufficiently independent of the Turkish state. According to the *Legal Tribune Online*, from 2020 onwards, the Hesse government offered religious instruction covering all schools of Islam for grades one through nine, with the curriculum set by the state.

Media outlets reported that as of October, a dispute between Abdel-Hakim Ourghi, an instructor at the Freiburg University of Education, and the Sunni School Council Foundation, which oversees Islamic religious education in Baden-Wuerttemberg public schools on behalf of the Baden-Wuerttemberg Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, remained unresolved. In 2021, the foundation rejected Ourghi's teaching license, citing missing credentials and the lack of an agreement with the foundation prior to his permanent employment, while Ourghi and media critics said the foundation opposed what they described as his more liberal interpretation of Islam. In July, Ourghi rejected the ministry's compromise suggestion that would have allowed him to keep his current position, under the supervision of a professor who held the credentials required by the foundation. Ourghi, who continued to teach at the university but not in the area of Islamic religious pedagogy, said he would continue to pursue a remedy in the courts.

According to Jehovah's Witnesses, in January in NRW state, a primary school teacher forced two boys to participate in holiday craft activities offensive to their religious beliefs. The teacher reportedly told the class that the boys were "not real Christians" because they did not participate in these activities. The

teacher also forced the boys under threat of punishment to sing the national anthem, in violation of their religious beliefs.

According to the Humanistic Union, an organization that describes its mission as working to protect and enforce civil rights, including the right to free development of the personality, total state government contributions during the year to the Catholic Church and the EKD totaled approximately €594 million (\$634.6 million), compared with €581 million (\$620.7 million) in 2021. The union said it calculated its estimate based on budgets of the 16 states. The Humanistic Union advocates the abolition of state church privileges such as faith-based religious education as a regular school subject, collection of church taxes, and other financial aid to religious groups.

The government continued to subsidize some Jewish groups. Based on an agreement between the federal government and the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the federal government contributed €13 million (\$13.8 million) to help maintain Jewish cultural heritage and support integration and social work, the same amount as in 2021. In addition, the federal government again provided financial support to the Institute for Jewish Studies in Heidelberg, the School of Jewish Theology at the University of Potsdam, and the Leo Baeck Institute, an international group researching the history and culture of German Jewry.

State governments continued to provide funds to Jewish communities and organizations in various amounts for such purposes as the renovation and construction of synagogues. The federal government continued to cover 50 percent of maintenance costs for Jewish cemeteries. State and local police units continued to provide security for synagogues and other Jewish institutions.

The federal and Lower Saxony governments reported they continued to subsidize the country's only public Islamic seminary, located in Osnabrueck and founded in 2021. Five Muslim federations, including the Central Council of Muslims in Germany and the Muslim Community of Lower Saxony, operated the seminary and a commission of their representatives set the curriculum. In 2021, the federal and Lower Saxony governments committed to provide €5.5 million (\$5.8 million) in funding to the school over five years. Approximately 85 students were enrolled at the seminary.

In September, the Stuttgart Higher Regional Court confirmed a lower court ruling ordering the Muslim Association for Culture, Education, and Integration (VKBI), a mosque association, to return a leasehold on property on which it partially built a mosque to the city of Leinfelden-Echterdingen, Baden-Wuerttemberg. The city sold the land to the VKBI in 2014 on condition that the mosque be open by October 2018. When the mosque was not completed by the agreed-upon deadline, the city invoked its contractual right to nullify the sale. The court ruled that the VKBI violated the sales contract, could not take ownership of the property, and must pay €6 million (\$6.4 million) in court costs, but that the city must compensate the VKBI for the increase in value of the property due to the nearly finished building. The fate of the still unopened mosque building itself was unclear at year's end, but according to media reports, the city and VKBI were engaged in talks to find a compromise and avoid further legal action.

According to a report in the *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung* newspaper, on February 9, the city council of Halle, Saxony-Anhalt, agreed to sell 1,900 square meters (20,451 square feet) of municipal land to the Muslim community for construction of a mosque and cultural center. Once completed, the mosque would be the first purpose-built mosque in Saxony-Anhalt. The CDU, Free Democrat Party, and Alternative for Germany voted against the sale, with the CDU stating that it based its vote on the need for public consultations and possible consideration of alternative sites.

The *Frankfurt Journal* newspaper reported construction of Frankfurt's Jewish Academy continued during the year. In May, representatives of the University of Frankfurt and the Central Council of Jews in Germany signed a memorandum of understanding to institutionalize close cooperation between the university and the academy. According to sponsors, the academy, due to open in 2024, would function as an intellectual center of Jewish life, philosophy, and culture. Construction costs, estimated at €34.5 million (\$36.8 million), were shared by the federal government, the state of Hesse, the city of Frankfurt, and the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

The weekly *Jüdische Allgemeine* reported that the Jewish community in Magdeburg laid the foundation stone of a new synagogue in the city on September 14, with the opening planned for November 2023. The state of Saxony-Anhalt funded €2.8 million (\$2.9 million) of the approximately €3.8 million (\$4 million) construction cost and the city of Magdeburg provided €600,000 (\$641,000), and a private association, the New Synagogue

Magdeburg, raised €400,000 (\$427,000) toward the project. Saxony-Anhalt Governor Reiner Haseloff called the synagogue's construction a "sign of confidence and solidarity."

On January 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock stated in a prerecorded video message played at a B'nai B'rith International event in Washington, D.C. that she was "ashamed" of growing antisemitism in the country. "Terrorist attacks on synagogues, hate speech, Jews wearing a kippah and being attacked on the open street in Berlin because of it, and people wearing yellow stars with the words 'unvaccinated' at demonstrations – all this is intolerable," she said, adding, "We respond to such acts with the full force of our laws."

Responding to an April 23 pro-Palestinian demonstration in Berlin at which participants yelled or chanted antisemitic slogans, threw objects at police, and harassed journalists, on April 24, Federal Interior Minister Nancy Faeser posted on Twitter, "There is no place for hostility towards Jews in our society. The constitutional state must act consistently here. We must never get used to antisemitic insults – no matter from where and from whom they come." Police arrested several demonstrators for assault, inciting racial or religious hatred, and disturbing the peace.

On September 4, speaking at an event marking the 25th anniversary of the Yad Vashem Circle of Friends in Germany, Chancellor Scholz stated, "On behalf of the German government, I can say that the fight against antisemitism, the fight against right-wing extremism and racism is our top priority." Scholz added that antisemitism and Holocaust relativism would not be tolerated. On August 17, Scholz expressed regret for not forcefully rebutting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on August 16, when Abbas said at the end of a joint press conference with Scholz that Israel had committed Holocausts against Palestinians.

On February 7, German state-owned international broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) released the findings of an independent commission of experts into antisemitism at the media outlet. According to DW, the investigators found "no structural antisemitism" in DW's Arabic service staff but concluded five employees made comments or posts that were antisemitic, relativized or denied the Holocaust, or denied Israel's right to exist. DW fired the employees. DW Director General Peter Limbourg said, "The mere suspicion of

antisemitism in a German, tax-funded institution must be intolerable for Jewish people in this country and around the world.... Freedom of expression is never a justification for antisemitism, hatred of Israel, and denial of the Holocaust.”

The government continued the German Islam Conference dialogue with Muslims in the country. The dialogue’s stated aim was to improve the religious and social participation of the Muslim population, give greater recognition to Muslims’ contributions to society, and – in the absence of a central organization representing all Muslims in the country – further develop partnerships between the government and Muslim organizations. Federal Interior Minister Faeser met with dialogue members and other representatives of the Muslim community chosen by the dialogue on May 5 to set the dialogue’s priorities for the next four years, which included strengthening social cohesion, preventing hate against certain groups, and strengthening the structures of Muslim organizations.

The Bavarian public radio station BR24 reported that on June 1, the Bavarian Higher Administrative Court rejected a lawsuit by a humanist organization, the Association for Freedom of Thought in Bavaria and Munich, challenging Bavaria’s decree that all state government buildings display a crucifix in their public entrances. The court determined that although the display was inconsistent with the state’s obligation to maintain neutrality in religious affairs, it did not amount to actionable infringement of the plaintiff’s rights, as the crucifixes were “essentially passive symbols without an indoctrinating or missionary effect.” The association indicated it would appeal the ruling.

The *Rheinische Post* reported that on August 9, NRW Commissioner for Jewish Life and against Antisemitism Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger called for a review of antisemitic stereotypes in the police force. Within and outside of the security services, antisemitic statements and acts “are frequently not recognized or given appropriate weight when reports are recorded or investigations are carried out,” she said. As an example, she cited demonstrations against COVID-19 restrictions at which participants wore yellow stars with the inscription “Unvaccinated.”

On August 27, after the publication of a report on sexual abuse in the Catholic Diocese of Trier prepared by an independent commission established by the diocese, Saarbruecken Mayor Uwe Conradt called for the resignation of the Bishop of Trier Stephan Ackermann and his predecessor Reinhard Marx, who

was Archbishop of Munich and Freising. Bishop Ackermann rejected the call for his resignation, saying the decision was for Pope Francis to make.

Media outlets reported in December 2021 and January that a number of public officials and Jewish groups condemned the Simon Wiesenthal Center for including Baden-Württemberg Antisemitism Commissioner Michael Blume in its 2021 “Global Antisemitism Top Ten” list, published in December 2021. The center cited an anti-Zionist social media post Blume reportedly “liked” in 2019. In January, Blume told the *Jewish Telegraph Agency* he did not recall the incident and said, “I believe that Zionism is fully legitimate and that Israel has the right to exist securely for all times to come. For me, anti-Zionism equates [to] antisemitism, pure and simple.” Federal Government Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany Felix Klein, Baden-Württemberg Minister President (governor) Winfried Kretschmann, the Jewish community of Baden, and the Anne Frank Educational Center supported Blume. The Central Council of Jews in Germany called the criticism of Blume “absurd.”

The country is a member of the International Holocaust remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

There were numerous reports of antisemitic, anti-Muslim, and anti-Christian incidents across the country, including assaults, verbal harassment, threats, discrimination, and vandalism. According to preliminary figures collected by the Ministry of Interior, there were 2,639 antisemitic crimes reported during the year – a drop of 12.8 percent from 3,027 in 2021 (but higher than the 2,351 crimes recorded in 2020) – including 88 involving physical violence (64 in 2021). A total of 31 persons were reported injured as a result of antisemitic crimes during the year, with no fatalities (29 in 2021, including 4 fatalities).

The ministry classified 84.3 percent of all antisemitic crimes in 2021 as motivated by far-right ideology, compared with 94.6 percent in 2020. The federal OPC annual report, released in June, stated that of the 64 violent antisemitic crimes committed in 2021 (compared with 57 in 2020), 35 were motivated by right-wing extremism, a 27 percent drop from 2020, when it reported 48 such crimes. According to the report, membership in right-wing extremist parties such as the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party dropped by 10 percent, from approximately 13,250 persons in 2020 to 11,800 in 2021.

RIAS, where victims may report antisemitic incidents regardless of whether they filed charges with police, said there were 2,738 such incidents in total in the states of Berlin, Brandenburg, Bavaria, Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, and Thuringia in 2021, including six incidents of “extreme violence,” 63 assaults, 204 incidents of damage to property, and 2,182 incidents of “hurtful behavior.” The majority of incidents took place on the internet or “on the street,” with other locations including public transportation, educational institutions, workplaces, and restaurants, among others. The RIAS annual report for 2021, which it released in June, attributed much of the increase to antisemitism at protests against measures aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19 and protests tied to violence in the Middle East.

Lower Saxony’s government recorded 250 antisemitic crimes in 2021, up from 180 in 2020. The Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania government counted 72 such crimes in 2021, up from 72 in 2020. Hamburg authorities recorded “more than 60” such crimes in 2021. NRW’s government recorded 437 antisemitic crimes in 2021, up from 276 in 2020. NRW Commissioner for Jewish Life and against Antisemitism Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger blamed the increase on “in particular, the May 2021 incidents [when there was an outbreak of antisemitic demonstrations and violence during violence in the Middle East] as well as the general rise in antisemitic incitement online and on the far right.”

The Ministry of Interior registered 732 crimes targeting Muslims and Muslim institutions in 2021, the latest year for which complete statistics were available, a decrease of 21.2 percent from 2020, when it registered 929 such crimes. Of the 732 crimes, 45 were violent and 54 targeted mosques. It classified 80 percent of all incidents, and 75 percent of the violent ones, as having been carried out by right-wing extremists. Other incidents included online hate speech against Muslims, hate mail, and aggressive public behavior against persons who appeared to be Muslim. In March, the NRW state government reported 110 anti-Muslim crimes occurred in the state in 2021, a 40 percent decrease from 186 in 2020. The government did not specify the number of incidents that were violent.

The Ministry of Interior report released in May counted 109 anti-Christian crimes in 2021, including seven cases involving violence, a decrease of 23 percent from 141 in 2020, of which seven involved violence. Of the 2021 crimes, 106 targeted churches; the ministry classified 27 percent of the crimes against churches as motivated by right-wing ideology and 28 percent as

motivated by left-wing ideology. The ministry did not indicate the possible motivation for the remaining three incidents.

Islam iQ and other media reported that on August 2, a man assaulted a three-months-pregnant woman wearing a headscarf while both were on a Berlin bus. According to police, the man initially insulted the woman and made a rude hand gesture. When she tried to move away from him, he spit in her face, punched her, and kneed her in the abdomen before trying to forcibly remove her headscarf. Other passengers intervened to stop the attack and the bus driver prevented the man from leaving the bus before police arrived. The woman went to the hospital for medical treatment. Police investigated the incident but had provided no information about an arrest by year's end.

Media reported two antisemitic assaults occurred in Berlin on September 13. In the first, a man shouted "terrible [expletive] Jew" and physically assaulted Ariel Kirzon, the rabbi of the Jewish community in Potsdam, in a Berlin subway station when Kirzon was speaking on the telephone in Hebrew. The same day, also in Berlin, an unknown man directed antisemitic insults at a fellow passenger in a commuter train. When the passenger protested, the first man was joined by a third person, and both beat the victim on the head and upper body; he eventually escaped by leaving the train at a stop. Police investigated but had not announced arrests in either case by year's end.

The *Berliner Zeitung* newspaper reported that on July 2, a woman in the Weissensee neighborhood of Berlin insulted and assaulted a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf in a tavern. The woman punched the victim's head and body multiple times and tore off her headscarf, throwing it to the ground. Police intervened and were investigating the incident at year's end.

DW reported that on March 10, a Syrian man residing in Germany punched a British tourist wearing a kippah in the face, threw his kippah to the ground, and stomped on it repeatedly. Police took the man into custody and later released him after ordering him to appear at the alien registration office.

According to media reports, on April 22 and 23, participants in two separate demonstrations of approximately 700 individuals in the Berlin districts of Neukölln and Kreuzberg chanted antisemitic slogans and assaulted and yelled insults and threats at police and journalists, whom they suggested were Jewish. Police were investigating multiple participants for assault and violation of hate speech laws. Federal Minister of the Interior Faeser, Berlin

Commissioner for Jewish Life and the Fight against Antisemitism Samuel Salzborn, and several national politicians condemned the antisemitism displayed at the demonstrations.

Media outlets reported that on August 9, a juvenile court sentenced 17-year-old Aram A. to 16 months' probation for assaulting a Jewish man while shouting antisemitic slogans in central Hamburg in 2021, leaving the man permanently partially blind in one eye. The court also ordered Aram A. to undergo antiviolence training, carry out community service, and pay the earnings from that service to the victim as compensation. The court also sentenced A.'s 15-year-old brother, who was present at the attack and also shouted antisemitic slurs, to community service.

Jehovah's Witnesses reported that on March 3, a Jehovah's Witnesses couple in Bad Laasphe received an anonymous letter containing death threats and referring to the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses during the Nazi regime. Police investigated but had made no arrests by year's end.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine* reported that in February, a Jewish member of the Frankfurt city council filed charges with police after receiving multiple antisemitic threats targeting him and his family during the preceding year. An unknown individual wrote in one letter, "Jew, you still don't get it. Watch yourself, watch out for your family.... You'll see." According to the victim, police conducted an investigation but could not identify the perpetrator.

The weekly *Die ZEIT* reported on August 28 that on August 26, two men racially insulted six women wearing headscarves at a streetcar stop in Leipzig. The women fled into a departing streetcar. The perpetrators tried to follow the women, but two other men who had come to the aid of the women stopped them. Police apprehended the suspects, but there was no further information on the case.

Media outlets reported that in February, unknown persons vandalized the Sultan-Ahmet-Camii Mosque in Dortmund, painting a swastika and anti-Muslim threats and slogans on the building. The mosque had received several threats preceding the attacks. Police investigated but arrested no suspects. Local and state officials and Deputy District Mayor Ralf Stoltze condemned the vandalism. In April, the mosque again received written anti-Muslim threats.

The television news program *Tagesschau* reported that on February 16, the trial began in Frankfurt of Alexander M., charged with 85 counts of defamation, incitement, and coercion for sending 116 threatening letters to prominent parliamentarians, women, and members of minority groups active in campaigns against extremism between 2018 and 2021. Many of the most visible targets were Muslim women. He also targeted the heads of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and the Central Council of Muslims in Germany. According to prosecutors, Alexander M. had a criminal record that included convictions for “right-wing motivated offenses.” In some letters, Alexander M. used the greetings “Heil Hitler” and “SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer” (“SS-Lieutenant Colonel”). It remained unclear how he obtained the confidential personal information from police and government records that he used in the letters.

The *Saarbruecker Zeitung* newspaper reported that on August 27, Pax Europa, which the Bavarian OPC classifies as an “Islamophobic” group that defames Muslims, held an anti-Muslim rally in Saarbruecken, Saarland, attended by approximately 150 participants. Critics of the rally, including many Muslims, staged a counter protest. Police formed a line to separate the two sides and arrested some demonstrators for assault and engaging in activities opposing the constitutional order.

The Catholic Church and the EKD continued to oppose the COS publicly. “Sect commissioners” or “departments on sects and worldview matters” of the EKD and the Catholic Church reportedly continued to investigate “sects and cults” and to publicize what they considered to be the dangers of those groups. On its website, the EKD Center for Questions of World Views continued to warn the public about what it said were the dangers posed by multiple religious groups, including the COS, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (Unification Church), Bhagwan-Osho, Transcendental Meditation, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Universal Life; the EKD continued to produce literature criticizing the groups.

Media outlets reported that on May 4, several dozen Jewish travelers accused Lufthansa of discrimination for preventing 127 passengers from boarding a flight from Frankfurt to Budapest. Lufthansa staff did not allow passengers with “Jewish” names or wearing Orthodox Jewish clothing to board the flight, according to press accounts and a video of the incident. Initially, Lufthansa argued that some Jewish passengers had failed to comply with mask requirements during a previous flight from New York. One Lufthansa staff

member was recorded on video as saying, “[It was] Jewish people who were the mess, who made the problems.” On May 10, Lufthansa apologized in a statement which many observers, including Hesse Commissioner for Jewish Life and the Fight against Antisemitism Uwe Becker, said fell short of taking full responsibility for discrimination against Jewish passengers. The *Jewish Telegraph Agency* reported in September that Lufthansa subsequently endorsed the IHRA’s Working Definition of Antisemitism. On September 15, the company and the American Jewish Committee (AJC) announced a partnership whereby AJC staff would train company employees to identify and respond to antisemitism.

Media reported that women who wore a hijab faced employment discrimination and that discrimination was made easier by the customary practice of requiring photographs as part of job applications. According to an independent report commissioned by the Berlin state government and published in September, discrimination against women who wore a headscarf was “virulent” in the state’s public agencies, and the state’s neutrality law made it impossible for women who wear headscarves to pursue careers in public service.

In October, the independent Expert Council on Integration and Migration released a study of antisemitic and anti-Muslim attitudes in the country. The study found the respondents fully agreed or somewhat agreed and fully or somewhat disagreed with the following statements in the percentages indicated: “the practice of Islam should be restricted in Germany” (29 percent agreed, 71 percent disagreed); Islam fits with German society (52.4 percent agreed, 47.6 percent disagreed); “The Muslims living in Germany integrate well into German society” (55.9 percent agreed, 44.1 percent disagreed); “I have the impression that there are many religious fanatics among the Muslims living in Germany” (38.4 percent agreed, 61.6 percent disagreed); “It would be fine for me to have a Muslim boss” (82 percent agreed, 18 percent disagreed); “It would be fine with me if my community had a Muslim mayor” (71.8 percent agreed, 28.2 percent disagreed). For all of these questions, younger respondents were more accepting of Muslims than older respondents. The survey did not give respondents the option of answering “neither agree nor disagree” or “I don’t know” to the questions.

According to a survey conducted by the polling firm Demoskopie Allensbach on behalf of the AJC and released May 10, of 1,025 persons aged 18 and older, 60 percent believed antisemitism was widespread in the country, and 64 percent

believed the problem had increased over the previous 10 years. Among 561 Muslims surveyed, 53 percent believed antisemitism was widespread and 49 percent believed it had worsened; 73 percent of all persons surveyed and 66 percent of Muslims surveyed saw antisemitism as a problem. When asked about the source of antisemitic sentiment, 43 percent of all respondents attributed it to right-wing extremists, 21 percent to anti-Israeli attitudes or hate, and 16 percent to conspiracy theories. Among Muslim participants, these figures were 37, 31, and 8 percent, respectively. Among all respondents, 52 percent said the country was discussing the problem of antisemitism enough; 31 percent said not enough, and 17 percent said there was too much discussion of it. Responses among Muslims were 55, 28, and 17 percent, respectively.

Jüdische Allgemeine reported that on June 5, four masked neo-Nazis posed for pictures before the Ulm Synagogue with banners displaying extremist and antisemitic symbols. One banner included the words “White Genocide” and “Great Replacement.” Ulm residents confronted the individuals, who left after a few minutes. Police investigated but had made no arrests by year’s end. Rabbi Shneur Tebnik said, “Anyone who is surprised by such things is a bit naive.” Exactly one year earlier, the synagogue was the target of an arson attack by a Turkish citizen who police believed subsequently fled to Turkey, where he was exempt from extradition. Baden-Württemberg Antisemitism Commissioner Blume said the banners’ symbolism “points to a solidified, antisemitic mythology. I rate the incident in front of the synagogue in Ulm on the anniversary of the arson attack as a targeted terrorist act.”

DW reported that representatives of the Jewish community and Hesse Antisemitism Commissioner Becker criticized the international art exhibition *documenta 15*, which opened on June 18 in Kassel, for exhibiting artwork with antisemitic imagery. Accusations initially focused on Jewish caricatures and offensive use of the Star of David in one artwork by the Indonesian artists’ collective Taring Padi. The artwork was removed on June 22, and Taring Padi denied its intent was antisemitic and apologized on the *documenta 15* website. After visitors said there was more antisemitic imagery in other artworks, the exhibition curators, the Indonesian art collective Ruangrupa, denied the accusations, but the exhibit’s director general, responsible for managing the exhibit, resigned on July 16. The rest of the *documenta 15* management team then stated that, after reviewing the other artworks visitors had described as antisemitic and consulting with experts, it partially covered one piece, added additional information to the descriptions of others, and continued to display

some works unaltered. State Minister of Media and Culture Claudia Roth criticized organizers and curators for failing to act against antisemitic content before the exhibit opened. German and international Jewish organizations said they had warned government leaders early on of possible antisemitic artwork at the exhibit.

RIAS stated protesters at demonstrations in the first part of the year against COVID-19 restrictions in Berlin, Munich, and other cities continued to use antisemitic rhetoric, including equating vaccines or the anti-COVID lockdown to Nazi-era persecution of Jews, or asserting that Jews were responsible for unleashing the coronavirus. Representatives of the Jewish community continued to warn of the connection between COVID-19 conspiracy theories, right-wing extremist groups, and antisemitism. For example, in an April 14 radio interview, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany Josef Schuster equated the situation to medieval Europeans blaming Jews for the Black Death. “[W]hen something happens, especially in the area of health, that can’t really be explained, then a minority is first blamed for it.... Exactly this was very strongly exploited by right-wing radical circles, which then infiltrated this corona[virus] denier scene accordingly. And there we see a clear increase in antisemitism.” On August 11, Baden-Wuerttemberg Antisemitism Commissioner Blume supported Schuster’s assessment in another interview, saying, “We must expect more antisemitism” from such groups.

The far-right group Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident (PEGIDA) held demonstrations in Dresden in March, April and October, although media and Saxony OPC reports indicated significantly fewer demonstrators than in the pre-COVID-19 years before 2020. Approximately 500 to 700 persons joined PEGIDA rallies, during which they continued to express anti-Muslim hatred, according to OPC reports.

Jehovah’s Witnesses reported unknown individuals vandalized a Kingdom Hall in Heidelberg on February 19 and 20 and again on April 9. On February 28, an unknown individual placed what Jehovah’s Witnesses described as “an explosive device” in a Kingdom Hall letter box in Recklinghausen-Suderwich. On April 18, unknown individuals painted satanic symbols on the exterior of a Kingdom Hall in Osnabrück-Nord. According to the group, police were investigating these incidents but had made no arrests by year’s end.

The *Berliner Zeitung* reported that on January 20, unknown persons set fire to the Paul-Gerhardt Church, an EKD church in Berlin, severely damaging its interior, including a 100-year-old altar and the organ. Police investigated the crime but had made no arrests as of year's end. The district council and Berlin Deputy Mayor Bettina Jarasch condemned the attack.

Police reported that on January 23, an individual fired shots from an air rifle at the Islamic Cultural Center in Halle, Saxony-Anhalt. Authorities said no one was injured. Police identified a man living across the street from the center as a suspect and interrogated him after finding an air rifle in his apartment but did not arrest him.

The *Berliner Zeitung* reported that on March 15, unknown persons threw several bottles at the Protection of the Blessed Mother Russian Orthodox Church in Berlin, shattering three windowpanes. The church, which was housing Ukrainian refugees at the time, said no one was injured. Police investigated the incident but had made no arrests by year's end.

The European Jewish Congress reported in May that unknown individuals knocked over the tombstones of 16 Jewish and four Christian graves in the Köthen municipal cemetery in Saxony-Anhalt. Police opened an investigation but had made no arrests by year's end.

The Leipziger Volkszeitung newspaper reported that on the night of October 24, unknown persons broke into the Lutheran Emmaus Church in Leipzig and vandalized the interior, including the nave and the organ room, before setting a fire and stealing the altar cross. Police were investigating at year's end.

In June, Goethe University and Tel Aviv University founded a joint interreligious research center to conduct interdisciplinary research on the relationship among Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The center, scheduled to offer workshops, conferences, and summer schools as well as a joint English-language master's program at both the Frankfurt and Tel Aviv locations, organized its first event during the year. Goethe University is to provide €50,000 (\$53,000) annually to the center for three years, and Tel Aviv University will contribute €20,000 euros (\$21,000) annually. Funding began during the year.

Media reported that on October 14, the Leipzig Regional Court indefinitely postponed the trial of singer Gil Ofarim on defamation charges related to an

October 2021 incident. Ofarim, who is Jewish, told police and media at the time that staff of a Leipzig hotel told him during check-in to remove his Star of David necklace. Hotel staff denied the allegation and filed criminal complaints of slander against Ofarim. According to video evidence, Ofarim was not wearing the necklace during the incident, and the prosecutor's office pursued charges against him. The court said the postponement was to give Ofarim more time to prepare his defense and consider an out-of-court settlement.

The public broadcaster Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk reported that in June, a court in Nordhausen, Thuringia, postponed the trial of an Afghan man accused of removing sacred religious objects from the Frauenberg Church in Nordhausen in 2021 to allow authorities to perform a psychiatric evaluation of the suspect and collect additional evidence. No trial date had been set at year's end. In 2021, the man removed the crucifix and a medieval wooden altarpiece, damaging both. In July, Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk reported church authorities restored the crucifix.

The *Aachener Zeitung* newspaper reported that on June 23, a court sentenced two men to suspended sentences, four years' probation, and fines for vandalizing a Jewish cemetery in Geilenkirchen in 2019. The pair knocked over more than 40 gravestones and defaced others with blue paint and Nazi symbols. The judge determined the men were motivated by antisemitism and ordered them to pay an estimated €13,000 (\$14,000) to restore the cemetery.

Approximately a dozen churches continued to use bells cast during the Nazi era and bearing Nazi symbols and inscriptions. In April, the Evangelical Church of Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia banned the use of bells, organ pipes, and other liturgical items bearing Nazi symbols or texts in its member churches. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper reported in March that the Evangelical Church of Central Germany, whose member churches owned a total of six such bells and also banned their use, displayed two removed bells in an exhibition in Eisenach intended to educate the public about the church's past ties to the Nazis and antisemitism.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy and Engagement

The U.S. embassy and the five consulates general continued to engage closely with authorities at all levels of government regarding responses to incidents of religious intolerance. Embassy officials met with Ambassador Robert Klinke, Germany's Special Representative for Relations with Jewish Organizations,

Issues Relating to Antisemitism, International Sinti and Roma Affairs, and Holocaust Remembrance, on multiple occasions to discuss antisemitism, the growth in antisemitic incidents and violence, antisemitic conspiracy theories, and Holocaust denial. Consulate general officials also met with the state commissioners for antisemitism. Embassy and consulate general officials engaged other local, state, and federal officials to discuss religious freedom issues, including meetings with state interior ministers, state parliamentarians from the Social Democratic Party, CDU, and Green Party, and mayors.

The United States-Germany Dialogue on Holocaust Issues, launched in 2021 to promote accurate Holocaust education and information and to combat Holocaust denial and distortion and antisemitism, continued during the year. As part of the dialogue, embassy officials met regularly with representatives of the country's foreign ministry, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe to develop programs and initiatives.

The Ambassador and embassy and consulate general representatives met with members and leaders of numerous local and national religious and civil society groups regarding their concerns related to tolerance and freedom of religion. The Ambassador met with President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany Schuster; Chairman and Secretary General of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany Aiman Mazyek; director of the AJC Berlin Lawrence and Lee Ramer Institute for German-Jewish Relations Remko Leemhuis; Director of the Jewish Museum Berlin Hetty Berg; representatives of the Leo Baeck Institute New York and Berlin; the CEO of the Ronald Lauder Foundation; and a senior representative of the Chabad Jewish Education Center in Berlin. Embassy officials also met with Seyran Ates, Imam of the Ibn Rushd-Goethe Mosque in Berlin; representatives of the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany; Catholic and EKD and other Protestant churches; Jehovah's Witnesses of Germany; the Association of Islamic Cultural Centers; the World Uyghur Congress; the Alevi Muslim community; and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat.

Topics of discussion with Jewish groups included concerns regarding what they characterized as the growing acceptance of antisemitism throughout the country, exacerbation of antisemitism by right-wing conspiracy groups, the challenges involved in supporting Jewish refugees from Ukraine, and growing antisemitism on the intellectual left, including in the cultural sphere.

Embassy and consulate general officials discussed topics with Muslim groups and representatives that included stereotypes and discrimination against Muslims, attempts by right-wing extremists to foment and exploit anti-Muslim prejudice, the need for interreligious dialogue, socioeconomic and cultural challenges encountered by Muslim residents and immigrants, difficulties that religious minorities faced when attempting to obtain refugee status, and the training of imams.

The Ambassador hosted engagements in Berlin around the documentary series *The U.S. and the Holocaust* to foster dialogue with a wide range of audiences on topics including countering antisemitism and other forms of prejudice against religious communities. On the night prior to the series' European premiere, the Ambassador hosted a dinner with the filmmakers and political, cultural, and interfaith leaders at which she addressed her own family's experience with religious persecution and society's responsibility to act against threats to religious freedom and democracy.

The Ambassador regularly highlighted her family's history of fleeing religious persecution by the Nazis in her press engagements, including in feature articles in major newspapers, among them *BILD*, the country's highest circulation newspaper, and the *New York Times*, widely read by the English-speaking population of the country.

During an October 18 visit to the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the Ambassador discussed U.S.-German collaboration to promote historically accurate Holocaust education and outreach efforts on countering antisemitism and all other forms of hatred and bigotry with the memorial's director.

In January, the Frankfurt Consul General met virtually with leaders of the Wuerttemberg Jewish community and the director of the Baden-Wuerttemberg State Ministry's Department for Countering Antisemitism to underscore the importance of International Holocaust Remembrance Day and discuss issues affecting the community. In July and August, the Frankfurt Consul General and a senior embassy official visited the Jewish community in Saarbruecken to discuss the situation of the only Jewish community in the state of Saarland. In August, the Frankfurt Consul General met with Frankfurt's Jewish community to discuss issues including community security and trends in antisemitism with community leaders. Also in August, the Frankfurt Consul General and a senior embassy official met with Jewish community leaders in the southwest of the country to discuss their views on the ongoing debate

concerning potentially antisemitic imagery in the international art exhibition, *documenta 15*.

The embassy and consulates general worked closely with Jewish communities, especially in the country's east, to provide small grants in support of programs promoting religious tolerance to leading NGOs countering violent extremism related to religion and antisemitism. For example, the embassy sponsored workshops by an award-winning American fiction author in eastern German schools, at which teachers and students learned how to counter antisemitism and religious bigotry through storytelling. The Consulate General in Leipzig supported a screening of a documentary in Chemnitz on the life of a Jewish resident of the city who fled Germany in 1939 by covering travel costs and enabling the film's producer to attend and speak at the screening.

The embassy helped to fund a tour of *#StolenMemory* by the Arolsen Archives, a traveling exhibition featuring containers of personal items confiscated from Jews by the Nazis, that visited several cities and towns in the eastern part of the country during the year. The exhibition educated the country's public about the Holocaust and Nazi persecution while also encouraging the public to locate family members of Holocaust victims and attempt to return artifacts to them. Embassy officials gave opening remarks at the April launch of the exhibition at Viadrina University in Frankfurt (Oder).

From March to June, the embassy conducted a virtual workshop series for Berlin and Brandenburg schools with the daughter of a Holocaust survivor. The series highlighted the survivor's experiences and the importance of the Jewish Cultural Association, an example of Jewish creativity in response to cultural exclusion. The series also addressed themes of courage, censorship, and stereotypes. In June, the embassy cofunded the participation of American filmmakers in the Jewish Film Festival Berlin and Brandenburg, the largest festival of Jewish film in the country.

In December, the Ambassador hosted a Hanukkah event with representatives of the Jewish, Christian, Sunni, Alawite, Alevi, and Ahmadiyya Muslim communities as well as NGOs and state and federal government officials from Berlin and the east of the country active on religious freedom issues. The Ambassador spoke on religious freedom, tolerance, and the need to combat antireligious hate, subjects central to the discussions that followed during the evening.

In December, the U.S. Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues visited Berlin and met Federal Government Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight against Antisemitism Klein; State Secretary in the Ministry of Finance Luise Hölscher; Director of the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Andrea Despot; International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Secretary General Kathrin Meyer; Arolson Archives Director Florian Azoulay; Ambassador Klinke; and representatives of the German Looted Art Foundation and officials working with the Federal Minister of State for Culture and Media involved in the research and return of looted art.

The embassy utilized virtual programs in which presenters spoke on ways of preserving and promoting accurate Holocaust narratives in the fight against antisemitism. The embassy and consulates general also actively promoted religious freedom and tolerance through their social media channels, utilizing Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to highlight the engagement of senior embassy officials on the issue. The embassy and consulates general created their own content, including greetings from the Ambassador on Jewish and Muslim holidays, social media posts on the right to freedom of religion, public meetings between U.S. government and German officials and religious community members, and public engagements by embassy and consular officials. Religious freedom and tolerance were topics of frequent focus of the embassy's and consulates general's digital platforms.