

# The Islamization of Germany in 2012.

by Soeren Kern

[December 24, 2012 at 5:00 am](#)

<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3512/germany-islamization>

Opinion polls consistently show that growing numbers of ordinary German citizens are worried about the consequences of decades of multicultural policies, as well the emergence of a parallel legal system based on Islamic Sharia law.

Post-Christian Europe became noticeably more Islamized during 2012.

As the rapidly growing Muslim population makes its presence felt in towns and cities across the continent, Islam is transforming the European way of life in ways unimaginable only a few years ago.

Some of the more notable Islam-related controversies during 2012 occurred in Germany, where the Muslim population has jumped from around 50,000 in the early 1980s to more than 4.5 million today.

What follows is a brief chronological review of some of the main stories involving the rise of Islam in Germany during 2012.

In January, German authorities welcomed the start of the New Year by officially confirming that they are monitoring German-language Internet websites that are critical of Muslim immigration and the Islamization of Europe.

In a January 4, 2012 interview with the Berliner Zeitung and the Frankfurter Rundschau, Manfred Murck, the director of the Hamburg branch of the German domestic intelligence agency (the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV)), said his organization was studying whether German citizens who criticize Muslims and Islam on the Internet are fomenting hate and are thus criminally guilty of "breaching" the German constitution.

The BfV's move marked a significant setback for the exercise of free speech in Germany and came amid a months-long smear campaign led by a triple alliance of left-wing German multicultural elites, sundry Muslim groups and members of the mainstream media, who have been relentless in their efforts to discredit the so-called counter-jihad movement (also known as the "Islamophobes") in Germany.

**In a country stifled by decades of political correctness**, the counter-jihad activists and bloggers have been giving a voice to millions of frustrated Germans who see the harm being wrought by the cult of multiculturalism.

Opinion polls consistently show that growing numbers of ordinary German citizens are worried about the consequences of decades of multicultural policies that have encouraged mass immigration from Muslim countries. Germans are especially concerned about the refusal of millions of Muslim immigrants to integrate into German society, as well as the emergence of a **parallel legal system in Germany based on Islamic Sharia law.**

Also in January, Muslims in Duisburg, one of the most Islamized cities in Germany, clamored for the right to **turn empty churches into mosques.** All of the churches are located in the gritty Hamborn and Marxloh districts in northern Duisburg where Islam has already replaced Christianity as the dominant religion, and where several Catholic churches have been abandoned.

In Germany as a whole, more than 400 Roman Catholic churches and more than 100 Protestant churches have been closed since 2000, according to one estimate. Another 700 Roman Catholic churches are slated to be closed over the next several years.

By contrast, Germany is now home to more than 200 mosques (including more than 40 mega-mosques), 2,600 Muslim prayer halls and a countless number unofficial mosques. Another 128 mosques are currently under construction, according to the Zentralinstitut Islam-Archiv, a Muslim organization based in Germany.

Meanwhile, on January 16 one of the oldest universities in Germany inaugurated the country's first taxpayer-funded department of Islamic theology. The Center for Islamic Theology at the University of Tübingen is the first of four planned Islamic university centers in Germany.

The German government claims that by controlling the curriculum, the school, which is to train Muslim imams and Islamic religion teachers, will function as an antidote to "hate preachers." (Most imams currently in Germany are from Turkey and many of them do not speak German.)

But the idea has been fiercely criticized by those who worry the school will become a gateway for Islamists who will introduce a hardline brand of Islam into the German university system.

In February, the interior minister of the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate, Jochen Hartloff, said he favored the introduction of Islamic Sharia law in Germany. In an interview with the German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung, Hartloff, a Socialist, said that using the Islamic moral code "is certainly conceivable when it comes to questions pertaining to civil law." Hartloff said using Sharia law to resolve family law issues such as alimony, divorce or financial contracts "could have a pacifying effect" in Germany.

Hartloff's comments were seconded by Michael Frieser, an expert on integration issues for the Conservatives in the German parliament. He told the Süddeutsche Zeitung that he has nothing against Muslim immigrants seeking

judgments according to their own legal systems. "That can ultimately serve the cause of integration," Frieser said.

In March, Muslim mobs in Berlin threatened to "burn down the neighborhood" after a German fatally stabbed an 18-year-old Muslim, in what police deemed was an act of self defence. The March 9 incident occurred in the heavily Islamized Berlin neighborhood of Neukölln, when the German, Sven N., tried to stop a fight between two groups of Turks over who should get a football that had been kicked over a fence. The Turks quickly turned their anger against the German. After a group of 20 Muslims armed with knives and daggers challenged Sven, he stabbed one of the attackers, Yusef Al-Abed, in the heart. More than 3,000 Muslims attended Yusuf's funeral, evoking scenes of the Gaza Strip (photos here).

In April, Islamic radicals launched an unprecedented nationwide campaign to distribute 25 million copies of the Koran, translated into the German language, with the goal of placing one Koran into every household in Germany, free of charge.

The mass proselytization campaign -- called Project "Read!" -- was organized by dozens of Islamic Salafist groups located in cities and towns throughout Germany.

Salafism is a branch of radical Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia that seeks to establish a Sunni Islamic Caliphate (Islamic Empire) across the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, and eventually the entire world. The Caliphate would be governed exclusively by Islamic Sharia law, which would apply both to Muslims and to non-Muslims. Salafists believe, among other anti-Western doctrines, that democracy, because it is a man-made form of government, must be destroyed.

Although Germany's domestic intelligence agency, the BfV, regards the Salafist groups as a threat to German security, Salafists have free reign in the country, and Salafist preachers are known regularly to preach hatred against the West in the mosques and prayer centers that are proliferating across Germany.

In May, more than 500 Salafists attacked German police with bottles, clubs, stones and other weapons in the city of Bonn, to protest cartoons they said were "offensive." Rather than cracking down on the Muslim extremists, however, German authorities sought to silence the peaceful critics of multicultural policies that allow the Salafists openly to preach violence and hate.

The clashes on May 5 erupted when around 30 supporters of a conservative political party, PRO NRW, which is opposed to the further spread of Islam in Germany, participated in a campaign rally ahead of regional elections in the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW)

Some of those participating in the rally, which was held near the Saudi-run King Fahd Academy in the Mehlem district of Bonn, the former capital of West Germany, had been waving banners depicting the Islamic Prophet Mohammad (see photo here), to protest the Islamization of Germany.

The rally swiftly disintegrated into violence (photos here and here) when hundreds of angry Salafists, who are opposed to any depiction of their prophet, began attacking the police, whose job it was to keep the two groups apart.

In the final tally of the melee, 29 police officers were injured, two with serious stab wounds, and more than 100 Salafists were arrested, although most were later released. According to Bonn's police chief, Ursula Brohl-Sowa, "This was an explosion of violence such as we have not witnessed in a long time."

In June, German authorities launched a major crackdown on Salafists suspected of plotting against the state. In nation-wide raids on June 14, over 1,000 German police searched about 70 Salafist homes, apartments, mosques and meeting places in seven of Germany's 16 states, in search of evidence that would enable the German government to outlaw some of the dozens of Islamist groups operating in the country.

In a June 8 interview with the newspaper Die Welt, Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrich said: "Radical Salafism is like a hard drug. All of those who succumb to her become violent."

Also in June, German Defense Minister Thomas de Maizière announced his intention to "multiculturalize" the German Armed Forces (Bundeswehr) by recruiting more Muslims into its ranks.

Germany formally discontinued compulsory military service on July 1, 2011 as part of a comprehensive reform aimed at creating a smaller and more agile army of about 185,000 professional soldiers. But Germany's new all-volunteer army has been unable to meet its recruiting goals, and military manpower prospects look dim for the foreseeable future.

In a desperate search for soldiers, German military officials have now identified Germany's Muslim Turkish population (3.5 million and counting) as a new source for potential recruits.

In August, German Intelligence Chief Gerhard Schindler issued a warning saying that Europe is at great risk of terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists.

In a wide-ranging interview with the German newspaper Die Welt, Schindler said the German foreign intelligence agency, the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), is particularly concerned about the threat posed by homegrown terrorists, individuals who were either born or raised in Europe and who travel to war zones like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia or Yemen to obtain training in terrorist methods.

Schindler's warning came amid the backdrop of a high-security court trial of four suspected Al Qaeda members, which began in the German city of Düsseldorf on July 25. German public prosecutors say the defendants -- three homegrown Islamists born in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia and one Moroccan national -- were planning to stage a "sensational terror attack" in Germany.

Also known as the "Düsseldorfer Cell," the defendants were also accused of plotting to assassinate the former commander of German Special Forces (KSK Kommando Spezialkräfte) as well as to attack the US Army base in the Bavarian town of Grafenwöhr.

Also in August, a new survey of Turkish-German mores and attitudes found that nearly half of all Turks living in Germany say they hope there will be more Muslims than Christians in Germany in the future.

The 103-page study, "German-Turkish Life and Values" (abridged version in German here), found that Islam is becoming an increasingly important component of the value structure of Turks in Germany, especially among the younger generation of Turkish-Germans, who hold religious views more radical than those held by their elders.

In September, a German court in Kassel refused to allow a Muslim student to skip co-ed swimming lessons based on her religious beliefs.

The closely watched case highlighted the growing number of conflicts between German school officials and Muslim parents who, for religious reasons, want to keep their children from participating in sports activities, biology classes and field trips.

The presiding judge, Hans Rothaug, declared: "The applicant should have attended swimming lessons. In this particular case, there are no grounds for exemptions."

In October, a court in Bonn sentenced an Islamist radical to six years in prison for stabbing two German police officers during the protest against "offensive" cartoons in Bonn.

Murat K, a 26-year-old German-born Salafist of Turkish heritage from the western state of Hessen, openly admitted that he had attacked and wounded the two police officers with a kitchen knife during the cartoon riots in May. He showed no remorse during his trial, saying only that he had been morally obligated to follow Islamic Sharia law.

Murat, whose last name has not been made known to the general public due to German privacy laws, claimed that the attacks on the police officers were justified because the German state had allowed offensive images of the Prophet Mohammed to be shown in public.

Murat responded to the verdict by declaring German courts to be illegitimate. He said: "I do not accept this court as legitimate. I am not sitting here voluntarily. Only Allah alone has the right to decide what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil, what is moral and what is immoral." Murat added: "I will answer only to Allah."

In an October 19 interview with the German newsmagazine FOCUS, the Secretary General of the ruling Christian Democratic Party (CDU), Hermann Gröhe, said the conviction of Murat makes it clear that Germany will not allow radical Muslims to "lead a religious war on German streets."

In November, Hamburg, the second-largest city in Germany, concluded a "historic treaty" with its Muslim communities that grants Muslims broad new rights and privileges but does little to encourage their integration into German society.

The November 13 agreement, signed by Hamburg's Socialist Mayor Olaf Scholz and the leaders of four Muslim umbrella groups, was praised by the proponents of multiculturalism for putting the northern port city's estimated 200,000 Muslims on an equal footing with Christian residents.

The most controversial part of the accord involves a commitment by the city government to promote the teaching of Islam in the Hamburg public school system. The agreement grants the leaders of Hamburg's Muslim communities a determinative say in what will be taught by allowing them to develop the teaching curriculum for Islamic studies.

On November 30, the northern German city of Bremen followed Hamburg's lead by concluding its own treaty [Staatsvertrag] with the local Muslim community. The Socialist mayor of Bremen, Jens Böhrnsen, said the treaty reflects "mutual recognition and respect of mutual values."

Critics, however, say the agreements, the first of their kind in Germany, will boost the growing influence of Islam in the country by encouraging the perpetuation of a Muslim parallel society.

Also in November, a new research survey found that Germans are overwhelmingly mistrustful of Islam and Muslim immigration.

The 28-page study, "Fear of the East in the West" (Die Furcht vor dem Morgenland im Abendland), was produced by the Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research, and was published by the center-right German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on November 21.

The research showed that more than half of the German population believes that Islam is prone to violence (64%); has a tendency toward revenge and retaliation (60%); is obsessed with proselytizing others (56%); and strives for political influence (56%).

More than 80% of Germans believe that Islam deprives women of their rights, and 70% say Islam is associated with religious fanaticism and radicalism. By contrast, only 13% of Germans associate Islam with love for neighbours, 12% with charity and 7% with openness and tolerance.

The study concluded that the image of Islam in Germany is "devastating." The findings -- which corroborate the conclusions of other recent studies -- underscore a growing divide between ordinary Germans, who are concerned about the consequences of mass immigration from Muslim countries, and Germany's political elites, who are determined to build a "multicultural" society at any cost.

In December, German authorities said Islamic extremists were behind a botched bomb attack at the main train station in Bonn. In the December 10 incident, a man allegedly linked to Al Qaeda left a bag containing a bomb on a platform at the train station. Authorities say the detonator was activated, but failed to cause an explosion.

Also in December, a militant Salafist group released several videos calling on its followers to take German hostages in an effort to secure the release of Murat K, the Islamist who is currently serving a six-year prison sentence for stabbing two policemen in Bonn in May.

The videos promise that "we will not rest until we have freed you from captivity" In one of the videos, a man speaking German with a foreign accent says: "Everyone who offends the Prophet will be slaughtered, whether near or far. And know this, brother, the Germans are easy enough to reach. We will take them prisoners, until you are free for your noble deed"

*Soeren Kern is a Senior Fellow at the New York-based Gatestone Institute He is also Senior Fellow for European Politics at the Madrid-based Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos / Strategic Studies Group. Follow him on Facebook.*