Suspect in Berlin stabbing is Syrian who wanted to ‘kill Jews,’ police say

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By AFP

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A Syrian man arrested after a stabbing attack at Berlin’s Holocaust memorial that wounded a Spanish man had been harboring a “plan to kill Jews,” police and prosecutors said Saturday.

The 19-year-old arrested Friday with blood stains on his hands was carrying a copy of the Quran and a prayer rug, and initial investigations suggested “connections with the Middle East conflict,” they said.

The attacker approached the 30-year-old Spanish man from behind at around 6:00 pm on Friday and stabbed him in the neck with a knife, according to the investigators.

The assault took place at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, a somber grid of concrete steles located near the Brandenburg Gate and the US embassy in Berlin.

The victim suffered life-threatening injuries to his neck and had to be placed in an artificial coma but was no longer in critical condition.

The Syrian suspect came to Germany in 2023 as an unaccompanied minor, police said. He was granted asylum and lived in the eastern city of Leipzig, according to the investigators.

There was no evidence of links to other people or groups and the suspect had not previously come to the attention of the police in Berlin, they said.

An AFP photographer witnessed the man approaching police to talk to them at the memorial, about three hours after the attack.

Police then wrestled him to the ground and handcuffed him, with one officer shouting “we have the suspect” to his colleagues.

Six people who witnessed the knife attack on Friday received counseling from rescue services at the scene, where bloodied clothes were left on the ground.

The incident came two days before German national elections and after a series of deadly attacks that have shocked Germany, including car-rammings and stabbing sprees.

German police said earlier Friday they [had arrested](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/chechen-teen-held-for-planning-attack-on-israeli-embassy-in-berlin-bild-reports/) an 18-year-old Russian man on suspicion of planning a “politically motivated” attack in Berlin.

The man was detained late Thursday in the state of Brandenburg, which surrounds Berlin, police and prosecutors said in a statement.

Authorities did not provide further details about the alleged attack plot, but the Tagesspiegel newspaper reported the suspect was Chechen and was believed to have been planning an attack on the Israeli embassy.

Riot police and specialist officers were involved in making the arrest, which came after a tip-off, officials said.

Germany has grown increasingly alarmed about rising anti-Jewish sentiment since the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel that sparked the war in Gaza.

A record 5,164 antisemitic crimes were recorded in 2023 in Germany, compared with 2,641 in 2022, according to figures from the federal domestic intelligence agency.

In an attack in early September, German police shot dead a young Austrian known for his ties to radical Islam as he was preparing to attack the Israeli consulate in Munich.

Other attacks have recently shocked Germany.

In December a man drove an SUV at high speed through a Christmas market crowd, [killing](https://www.timesofisrael.com/germany-christmas-market-attack-suspect-charged-with-murder-attempted-murder/) six people and wounding hundreds in the eastern city of Magdeburg.

In another attack in January, a man with a kitchen knife attacked a kindergarten group, killing a two-year-old boy and a man who tried to protect the toddlers.

Another major attack followed just 10 days before the election when a man [plowed](https://www.timesofisrael.com/28-injured-as-car-drives-into-munich-crowd-bavaria-governor-says-attack-suspected/) a Mini Cooper car through a street rally in Munich.