Man drives car into motorcyclists in German highway terror attack

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A 30-year-old Iraqi-born man drove his vehicle into several motorcycles on a Berlin highway Tuesday evening, injuring six people, in what German authorities said was an Islamist-inspired terror attack, according to reports.

“According to the current state of our investigation, we assume this was an Islamist-motivated attack,” said Berlin’s senator for the interior, Andreas Geisel. “A religiously motivated background cannot be excluded.”

Three of the victims suffered severe injuries, with at least one of them in life-threatening condition, officials said.

One of the three was a firefighter going home from work, Geisel said. It was unclear if he was the one who is in life-threatening condition.

The suspect — identified by local media only as Samrad D. — is being investigated for three cases of attempted murder after allegedly ramming the vehicles at three different locations about 7 p.m.

He was driving a black Opel Astra, which he stopped on the road after the third crash and put an old ammunition box on the roof, claiming it had explosives inside, officials said.

Multiple media outlet reported that he shouted “Allahu akbar!” — “God is great!” — as he got out of his car. The Bild daily reported that he also yelled: “Nobody gets closer, or you will all die.”

The man then rolled out a prayer carpet and started praying, the daily Tagesspiegel reported.

An Arabic-speaking cop approached the suspect, who is known to Berlin police, and talked to him before detaining him, according to the outlet.

The German DPA news agency reported that he allegedly made references to his plans on Facebook before the attack, posting images of the car, as well as religious writings.

The suspect was born in Baghdad in 1990 and lived in a refugee home in Berlin. In 2018, he was detained for injuring people and taken to a mental institution for a short period, Tagesspiegel reported.

There were indications that the suspect has mental health issues.

“The fact that the suspect was possibly suffering from psychological problems does not make this issue any easier,” Geisel said. “If personal problems mix with religiously loaded ideas, this can lead to uncontrollable acts — yesterday’s events have shown in a very painful way how vulnerable our society is.”