

Anti-immigrant rage spills over in Germany following child murder in Frankfurt

Anti-immigrant rhetoric has grown more prominent in days following the murder of an 8-year-old at Frankfurt Station.



A picture taken on August 5, 2019, at Frankfurt am Main's central station shows flowers that people left to pay tribute to an eight-year-old boy who died after he was pushed under a train a week earlier. The horrific crime has dominated newspaper front-pages and TV news bulletins and led politicians to call for heightened security, more camera surveillance and tighter border controls. AFP

German officials have warned of a growing threat to migrants from far-right groups that have seized on the killing of a young boy in Frankfurt last week after he was pushed in front of a train.

Grief has turned to rage across the country following the death of the 8-year-old boy who was standing on the platform with his mother. The prime suspect in the killing is an Eritrean-born father of three, leading to the incident being linked to the mass influx of refugees and migrants into Germany since 2015.

Police have, as of yet, given no motive as to why the little boy and his mother were pushed in front of the high-speed train by the 40-year-old Swiss national. While she was able to escape the path of the fast-moving train by rolling away but her son was reportedly killed instantly. A number of German politicians have said the killing in Frankfurt and other attacks have illustrated, once again, the dangers posed by mass immigration to the country.

The interior minister for Bavaria Joachim Herrmann has also said immigrants pose a danger to Germany. "You have to say that very clearly; people come to us who are much quicker to resolve conflicts by force," Mr. Herrmann, whose party is the Bavarian counterpart to German chancellor's Angela Merkel's Christian

Democratic Union, said. "We cannot accept everyone. That is too much for us to handle. Anyone new to the country could also bring additional risks to our country," he added.

Meanwhile, the hard-right opposition party also sought to stoke the controversy.

"The hideousness of this act can hardly be surpassed," the leader of Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, Alice Weidel, wrote on Twitter. She demanded at the same time that the government "finally start to protect the citizens of this country".

It has been refugees and migrants who have borne the brunt of public anger following the death. The German regional paper the *Rheinische Post* reported that 50 members from the extreme-right group Bruderschaft Deutschland tried to force their way into a swimming pool in Dusseldorf, more than 200 kilometers away, on Sunday to confront the mostly migrant and refugee patrons at the center.

The Bruderschaft Deutschland members came to the pool from a vigil for the eight-year-old boy at Dusseldorf Station. The group, which first gained notoriety in 2017 when members were accused of breaking the country's strict laws against Nazi imagery, was formed as a direct response to the influx of predominantly Syrian and Afghan refugees into Germany in 2015.

Police rebuffed the members of Bruderschaft Deutschland from the pool but deemed no laws had been broken and no arrests were made.

Along with questions following the death of the 8-year-old in Frankfurt, Mr. Herrmann was also responding to a recent ax attack carried out by a 36-year-old Kosovan man in Dusseldorf station. Nine individuals were injured in the attack on Thursday. Police have said the man was a known paranoid schizophrenic and he has been referred to a judicial hospital for treatment. Similarly, police have emphasized that the 40-year-old suspect in the Frankfurt case had a history of mental illness.

Dr. Paul Stott of the Henry Jackson Society told *The National* that Germany's immigration policy since 2015 had acted as an "adrenaline shot" for the far-right. He added that a series of criminal incidents involving migrants had also added fuel to the flames.

“Germany has had a series of deeply contentious incidents like this in recent years since Mrs. Merkel’s unprecedented decision to open the borders to migrants in 2015. Since then, the German media and German authorities have reacted defensively to incidents of crime – including rape and murder – involving migrants,” Dr. Stott said.

“At times that defensiveness, in Cologne following trouble on New Year’s Eve 2015-2016, has lapsed into dishonesty. That, and the rapid demographic change occurring in Germany has provided a stimulus to a traditionally weak far right,” he added.

In 2015 Germany’s statistics office recorded the arrival of 2.14 million immigrants to the country, the largest ever recorded arriving in the European nation. The huge influx, an increase of 36 percent from the previous year, was fuelled in part by refugees from the war in Syria. More than 298,000 Syrians arrived in Germany in 2015.

During New Year’s Eve celebrations that year hundreds of German women reported sexual assaults by men believed to be migrants, particularly in Cologne. In the aftermath, as those reports trickled down to the press, German attitudes hardened to migration and the cause was seized upon by the right to call for the closure of Germany’s borders.

Source:

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