

Germany: Refugee murdered after anti-immigrant demonstration

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An Eritrean refugee, Khaled Idris Bahray, was murdered Monday night in the German city of Dresden just a few hours after a right-wing anti-immigrant rally called by the Pegida movement involving, according to the police estimates, 25,000 people. The timing of the murder and the character of subsequent police investigations raise major questions.

Twenty-year-old Bahray was found at 7:40 a.m. Tuesday morning by local residents in the courtyard of a prefabricated housing block. He lived in the block in the district of Dresden Leubniz-Neuostadt together with seven other refugees in a flat assigned by the city administration. A roommate found him covered in blood; rigor mortis had already set in.

According to the local police, however, “there was no evidence of third-party involvement”. Reports in the local newspaper reveal that the first reaction of the police press office on Tuesday morning was that there was “nothing to report.” The dead refugee was first mentioned by the police in the afternoon.

It was only after reports circulated in the *Morgenpost Sachsen* and Twitter that Bahray had been found in a pool of blood with clear injuries to his neck and chest that the police took a different tack. On Wednesday, Dresden police chief Dieter Kroll declared: “It is not possible to ascertain what happened based on the external characteristics of the corpse. There is an initial suspicion of unnatural death. The homicide commission is investigating.”

Only at this time, some 30 hours after the discovery of the corpse, were forensic specialists sent to the scene of the crime. The decision of the police to refrain from immediate follow-up after finding a bloodied corpse is scandalous. One Green Party parliamentary deputy has issued a complaint against the police claiming they deliberately decided not to intervene.

The behavior of the police and judicial authorities cannot be explained away by mere negligence. Rather, it is clear that there was a deliberate attempt to cover up a racist murder. Bahray’s body was found less than two kilometres

away from the end point of the demonstration by Pegida and its crowd of far-right extremists, anti-Islam fanatics and nationalists.

Despite the likely political background to the murder, the police are restricting their enquiries to interrogating the residents of the block where the refugee was housed. Forensic scientists have searched for clues in the refugee’s apartment, but the state attorney has announced that a murder weapon had not been found.

The entire manner of the police investigation recalls the cover-up conducted by the investigating authorities in the murders carried out by the neo-fascist NSU terrorist cell. The NSU was able to carry out its series of murders and bank robberies for many years while the authorities repeatedly raised criminal allegations against the family members and friends of the murder victims.

Although the exact circumstances of the murder of Khaled Idris Bahray remains unknown, there is already evidence for a racially motivated act.

Bahray was last seen by his flat-mates at 8 p.m. on Monday. “He wanted to go shopping at the supermarket,” said one of his roommates. According to one newspaper, the pleasant and friendly young man allowed other customers to bypass him at the checkout. Bahray never returned from his shopping trip.

His roommate stated that the refugees normally only went out in groups because they feared attacks by racists. Many refugees avoid the streets altogether since the weekly Pegida demonstrations began some months ago. A friend of Bahray told the refugee aid organisation Pro Asylum: “The people here are hostile towards us, there is hatred in their eyes, we do not dare come out, we need protection.” The refugees spoke of repeated insults and threats.

Michael Nattke, a lecturer at the Cultural Office of Saxony, told the *tageszeitung*: “There is much hostility towards asylum seekers in Dresden, especially on Mondays.” According to Nattke, “over a thousand organised neo-Nazis with a huge potential for aggression” take part in the Pegida marches. His colleagues were surprised every

Monday that “there were no incidents of outright violence.”

Robert Kusche, the head of the counseling centre for victims of right-wing violence in Dresden, confirmed the intimidating nature of Pegida demonstrations. According to his findings, the refugees have “recognised that the Pegida marches pose a danger to them even though some do not speak German.”

There was a serious incident following the Pegida demo on December 22, when a group of Alevis (Turkish) youth was attacked by a mob. The attackers were masked with Dynamo Dresden football scarves and threatened the young people with electric batons, knives and pepper spray. The police have been unable to find the suspects.

Pegida supporters have also vilified and ridiculed Bahray on Facebook and Twitter. Statements such as “now one less living here at our expense” or “If it had been a German there would have just been a police report without photo...but instead the press goes crazy about this Bimbo...damn pack!”

Also this week, the city of Dresden has abandoned plans to accommodate 94 refugees in a hotel after the owner backed down at the last minute and withdrew his agreement. The company that owns the hotel Prinz Eugen declared the decision was made for “internal reasons.” But the city administration admitted there had been “massive opposition to the project from the population and the surrounding environment.” Racist graffiti had been daubed on the hotel, and there was intimidation on social networks, including a warning in the form of a question whether asylum centres “have to burn first before the city quits the project.”

The tense conditions in the city of Dresden are the work of the media and leading politicians who embraced the Pegida movement from the beginning and built it up out of nothing. They bear responsibility for the murder of Khaled Idris Bahray, should it be confirmed that he was the victim of a racist mob.

Leading political figures ranging from federal interior minister Thomas de Maizière (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) Saxony’s minister president Stanislaw Tillich (CDU) and Thuringian minister president Bodo Ramelow (Left Party) have all expressed their understanding for the demonstrators and the alleged “legitimate concerns and fears of the population” regarding too many foreigners and refugees. They have repeatedly offered to conduct talks with the right-wing mob and even provided them a public forum in the Regional Centre for Civic Education in Saxony to spread their racist filth.

On two occasions, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* has opened its pages to Konrad Adam, the deputy chair of the right-wing nationalist Alternative for Germany, which has close links with Pegida, to agitate against Islamism. Other German newspapers have praised Pegida for making it

possible to criticise asylum seekers and Islamism without being branded as a “right-wing extremist.”

In Saxony, the state government has in large part adopted the policies of Pegida. The state interior minister, Markus Ulbig, vigorously opposes any ban on deportations. Confronted with a petition of 11,000 signatures requesting that he refrain from carrying out deportations of refugees in winter, he reacted with the heartless comment: “Climate is not a category of immigration law.”

Ulbig also lobbied the federal government to declare Tunisia a “safe country of origin” in order to reject all asylum applications from Tunisian refugees and deny them any possibility of appeal. Pegida had already denounced the handful of refugees from Tunisia in Saxony as “economic refugees.”

This chauvinism and nationalism has been deliberately fanned by influential layers in political and media circles to enforce a reactionary anti-immigrant policy. The consequences arising from the mobilisation of the brown mob is now very evident in Dresden.

A roommate of the murdered Bahray was clearly stunned by his murder, saying: “Khaled was a wonderful person, he had many goals, wanted to learn German, work and live in peace. Why did he have to die in such a manner?”

A solidarity rally for Khaled Idris Bahray was held in front of Albertinum Museum in Dresden. Inside the museum, the Saxony administration was holding its New Year’s under the entirely inappropriate motto, “From all over the world—at home in Saxony.”



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