

# The origins of the attack in Ansbach, Germany

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The horrific attack in Ansbach by a psychologically unstable person, who had fled from Syria to Germany, is being exploited by politicians from all parties to step up attacks on refugees and press ahead with the strengthening of the state apparatus. By contrast, there is silence on the real causes of the violent outburst.

On Sunday evening, a 27-year-old man set off an explosive device concealed in his backpack at the entrance to a music festival in the Bavarian town of Ansbach. The individual apparently wanted to gain access to the festival grounds, but was prevented from entering because he did not have a ticket. The explosion killed the perpetrator and injured 15 people, four of them seriously.

Investigators suggested that the perpetrator had links to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) because corresponding material was found on his mobile telephone and in his room at a refugee accommodation centre in Ansbach. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack, publishing a video allegedly showing the suspected attacker pledging allegiance to the group and warning of attacks. Whether the person depicted in the video was actually the attacker remains unclear.

The attacker was clearly a very unstable and insecure man. According to investigators, he had already attempted suicide twice and was for a time in psychiatric care.

Regardless of how close the ties to ISIS were, the evidence to date regarding the attacker's background points to him having been traumatised and possibly radicalised by his experiences in the Syrian war, the stresses of fleeing and the inhumane treatment in Germany.

The *Bild* newspaper reported having seen the man's asylum application. According to the paper, he applied for asylum in Germany two years ago under the name

Mohammad D. In it, he stated that his wife and children were killed in a grenade attack in the Syrian city of Aleppo. He had also been injured by shrapnel from a grenade.

According to his file, when he fled from Syria, he first arrived in Bulgaria where he was detained. His serious injuries were not treated there. He made an application for asylum in Bulgaria and received subsidiary protection.

Subsequently, he allegedly travelled on to Austria, where he was once again registered as a refugee. When he finally arrived in Germany and applied for asylum, it was rejected on the grounds that D. had already been registered in Bulgaria and must therefore be deported to that country in line with the Dublin III agreement.

The deportation was repeatedly delayed due to the injuries and suicide attempts, but without D. ever being granted a right to reside in Germany. Like 170,000 people in Germany, he was only granted a suspension of deportation.

Deportation continued to hang over the already traumatised man like a sword of Damocles.

It is possible that some of his assertions in the asylum application will turn out to be embellished or untrue. But it is beyond doubt that it is the wars led by the Western powers in the Middle East that create the conditions for such attacks.

The imperialist wars in Libya, Iraq, Yemen and Syria have laid waste to cities and destroyed entire societies. Terrorist militias like ISIS were systematically promoted and armed by the US to overthrow Syrian ruler Bashar al-Assad.

The desperate people seeking to flee the hell of the conflict have been shot on the Turkish border, drowned in the Mediterranean and detained in camps in Greece.

If they eventually reach Germany, they are confined

to inhumane camps, which often disregard the most basic requirements of hygiene and are only appropriate for short-term accommodation. They are exposed to endless harassment and more often than not deported to allegedly safe third countries or their country of origin.

It is this increased brutality in both foreign and domestic policy that produces the violence expressed in the Ansbach attack. It is therefore equally as disgusting as it is revealing that representatives from the Left Party to the CSU and Alternative for Germany (AfD) exploited the attack to intensify agitation against refugees and to demand a further strengthening of the state apparatus.

Sahra Wagenknecht, leader of the Left Party's parliamentary fraction, immediately attacked Chancellor Angela Merkel's refugee policy from the right on Monday, declaring in a press statement, "The events of recent days show that the acceptance and integration of a large number of refugees and migrants is connected with serious challenges and is much more difficult than Merkel's light-minded 'We can manage this' last autumn would have had us believe."

She spoke out in favour of closer surveillance of refugees and called for the German government to "retain the trust of the people in the capacity of the state and its security forces to act." Then on Tuesday, she explicitly raised criticisms that the police had been "cut to nothing and dismantled."

The Green Party mayor of Tübingen, Boris Palmer, stated on Facebook that it was inevitable that people would be asking, "what it means when in Würzburg an Afghan, in Munich a German-Iranian and in Reutlingen a Syrian attacked people with weapons." His party colleague, Baden-Württemberg state premier Winfried Kretschmann, has already passed a package of additional security measures worth €30 million and announced stricter checks of refugees.

CDU parliamentary deputy Armin Schuster rejected the so-called welcoming culture with which millions of people expressed their solidarity with refugees. "We require a farewell culture," said the domestic policy expert. His parliamentary colleague Torsten Frei went even further, speaking of a "culture of deportation," summing up the ruling elite's contempt towards refugees.

The same goes for Berlin's interior state senator Frank Henkel, who has been waging an aggressive

campaign for a strong state for months. "We have obviously imported a few totally bestialised people," he stated, grotesquely dehumanising the refugees.

CSU head Horst Seehofer also intends to intensify the surveillance of refugees and announced a "significant strengthening" of the police. In addition, he called into question protection against deportation for people whose home countries are torn by war.

Much of the media joined in the chorus of agitation. Jasper von Altenbockum argued in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* that it was no longer important what factors contributed to acts of violence. The only important things were that fewer refugees be let into the country and that the police be strengthened, even if this was done at the expense of "quality of life."

Such a blunt appeal for a police state has previously only come from the extreme right. The same applies to many of the remarks cited above. In the cross-party support for the strengthening of the state, a fundamental social truth is being revealed: the interests of the ruling elite are no longer compatible with the needs of the vast majority.

This is especially evident in the inhumane treatment of refugees, but is not limited to this. While a tiny elite has amassed vast quantities of wealth, capitalism has nothing to offer the great majority apart from poverty and war. This is why the state is being strengthened and is using ever more chauvinist agitation to enforce the interests of the ruling elite.



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