

# Homelessness among young people in Germany has almost tripled since 2022

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The number of homeless people in Germany has risen to a record high. According to the projections of the Federal Association for Assistance to the Homeless (BAG W) at the end of last year, than 1 million people were homeless in 2024, i.e., without a permanent tenancy.

The housing crisis is destroying the lives of tens of thousands of children and young people. The number of homeless minors has almost tripled nationwide between the beginning of 2022 and the beginning of 2025—from around 47,200 to over 137,000. This information emerges from a reply by the federal government to a parliamentary question from the Left Party.

If young adults are added, well over 190,000 people under the age of 26 now live without their own abode, in emergency shelters, with acquaintances or directly on the streets. Specifically, the number of homeless young adults has increased from 18,800 to 55,700 within three years.

The most populous state, North Rhine-Westphalia, accounts for the most homeless young people with a total of 31,700, closely followed by Baden-Württemberg with 29,500, and the city-state of Berlin with 15,700.

Homeless young adults are very often former recipients of youth welfare support, who have to move out of their residential facilities at the age of 18 or shortly thereafter and often slide into homelessness. These young people are mostly socially isolated and no longer able to continue their schooling or vocational training.

Since 2008, the number of homeless people has been rising ever more sharply. However, there is a very high number of unreported cases due to “hidden homelessness,” when people stay with friends and acquaintances or in emergency shelters. In recent years,

homelessness has affected a disproportionately large number of war refugees from Ukraine and the Middle East, whose home countries have been reduced to rubble by NATO wars.

In a press release in November, the chairwoman of BAG W, Susanne Hahmann, said of the rapidly rising homelessness, “The causes are known: too little affordable housing, poverty and impending cuts in the social security system.”

Many people can no longer afford the exploding rents. According to Statista, apartment rents have risen by almost 10 percent in the last five years, while housing corporations like Vonovia and Deutsche Wohnen (which is now part of Vonovia) hoard tens of thousands of apartments and rake in billion-euro profits. For example, Vonovia was able to report a net income for the year of around €4.19 billion in 2025 and almost double its profits compared to the €2.46 billion from 2020. TAG Immobilien was also able to rake in around €26.2 million in 2025.

The crisis in housing is clearly evident when looking at the enormous shortage of social housing, the stock of which has more than halved in the last 20 years, with the trend continuing downwards. Particularly in the 1990s and early 2000s, federal funds for social housing construction were massively cut, many apartment buildings were privatised and old obligations expired en masse.

Thus, the number of social housing units fell from 3.9 million in 1987 to 1.6 million in 2010. According to experts, Germany needs 1 million additional social housing units to halfway cover the demand, and 5 to 6 million to cover all those entitled. This requires hundreds of thousands of new buildings per year. In reality, however, only between 20,000 and 30,000 new apartments have been built recently.

While the social crisis and lack of affordable housing have enormously increased homelessness in recent years, it is clear that this will continue and intensify even further. Germany is constantly escalating its support for the war with Russia in Ukraine, while the old post-1945 order is collapsing like a house of cards.

German imperialism is once again rearming to an extent not seen since Hitler. According to the government, Germany is to become “fit for war” and be increasingly able to assert itself militarily against former allies such as the US. To achieve these megalomaniacal goals, every cent must flow into rearmament.

While the government spends money on war, it is the task of the states and municipalities to make these funds available through massive social cuts. Massive cuts to health, pensions and social benefits are already in the pipeline.

These austerity measures will in turn drive up the housing shortage. The abolition of Bürgergeld (welfare payments) intensifies the pressure on the unemployed, whose benefits can ultimately be completely cancelled—including the costs for accommodation. Even more people will end up on the streets.

In a survey at the end of last year, BAG W found that 17 percent of all facilities and services for emergency housing assistance are threatened by or already affected by financial cuts. This includes both emergency provisions and preventive assistance.

The situation is particularly acute in the capital, Berlin. The head of the Central Advisory Office for People in Housing Need Berlin, Elfriede Brüning, recently warned, “We are already short of two advisory staff, so not all enquiries can be served during consultation hours. Placements in other facilities are hardly possible. They too have long been working at the limit of their capacities. In some cases, people are even referred to us instead, for example those whose youth welfare support is cut, or from authorities with too little staff.”

In the capital, the devastating role of the Left Party is evident. Wherever it has co-governed in recent decades, it has supported, advanced and enforced right-wing austerity policies. In Berlin, it formed a coalition with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) from 2002 to 2011 and with the SPD and the Greens from 2016 to 2023.

Between 2016 and 2024, the number of homeless in

Berlin rose by approximately 85 percent, from 30,000 to over 55,000. Even if the survey methods changed during this period, the increase is stark. The state administrative department expects an increase to up to 85,600 homeless people by 2030 in Berlin alone.

These developments cannot be stopped under capitalism. This system, which is heading towards world war and fascism, has nothing progressive to offer workers and youth. It is necessary to abolish capitalism and replace it with a socialist system, in which the focus is no longer on the profits of a small minority at the top of society, but on the needs of the vast majority of the population.

To fight for this, workers and young people must establish rank-and-file action committees in every school, every workplace and every neighbourhood. The action committees must be politically independent of the bourgeois parties and trade unions in order to organise resistance to rearmament and the social devastation being implemented. The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) and its youth organisation, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality, fight for this programme.



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