Far-right group arrested for xenophobic plans in Germany

Berlin, February 16 (RHC)-- German authorities detained a group of 12 men for allegedly setting up a far-right organization with the goal of carrying out attacks against politicians, asylum seekers and Muslims, the Federal Prosecutor's Office (GBA) reported

Prosecutors confirmed that four of the suspects took part in a plan to organize a "terrorist organization" in September last year and regularly met and contacted each other by phone, on online forums and in chat groups. The rest of them were arrested on suspicion of supporting the organization with money and weapons.

Their main goal was to create chaos and an atmosphere of fear that resembled a civil war, "and eventually destroy the democratic system and social cohesion of the federal republic," the GBA said. "For the purpose of creating conditions that resemble a civil war, attacks that were not yet concrete against politicians, asylum seekers and members of the Muslim faith were planned."

The German government last year launched a crackdown on right-wing political violence in response to a rise in hate crimes. German authorities also have stated that about 90 percent of the 1,800 incidents recorded against Jews last year were committed by individuals espousing far-right views.

Given the growing concerns, new measures were approved after the killing of a pro-immigration politician and a deadly attack on a synagogue and kebab shop in Halle by an anti-Semitic gunman, including tougher rules on gun ownership laws and stricter monitoring of hate speech online.

Germany's domestic intelligence agency estimates there are about 24,100 "right-wing extremists" in the nation, about half of whom are potentially violent. According to the government, there were nearly 9,000 attacks by far-right groups and individuals in the first half of 2019 —an increase of nearly 1,000 compared with the same period the year before.

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