

# *Germany's far-right crimes hit record amid racism surge in Europe*

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Police observe area during Friday prayer following a shooting in Hanau near Frankfurt in front of Sehittlik Mosque in Berlin. (Photo: AFP)

Berlin, February 6 (RHC)-- Germany has reported a record rise in the number of crimes committed by far-right extremists in the country, last year. Police recorded more than 23,080 far-right related crimes in 2020, which was 700 more than what occurred in the previous year.

The provisional figures for last year include 1,054 violent crimes, which led to at least 307 injuries. The figure, published by left-wing lawmaker Petra Pau, could yet rise. Pau, the vice-president of the German Bundestag said that she was "not surprised" by the latest figures. "The acceptance of violence as a replacement for politics is rising," she said.

Pau also said that the coronavirus pandemic had acted as a "booster" for far-right crime in the country. Germany has recently witnessed a wave of attacks by far-right elements targeting minorities and refugees across the country.

Last month, assailants targeted a mosque in the southwestern city of Baden-Wurttemberg, inflicting material damage to the place of worship. In the meantime, far-right political parties have managed to secure more votes and support amid the health crisis across the continent.

In France, far-right leader Marine Le Pen has returned to the presidential race, with her anti-Muslim and anti-immigration campaign. Last week, she proposed a controversial ban on Muslim headscarves in all public places and proposed a new law to ban "Islamist ideologies" which she called "totalitarian and murderous."

Le Pen, who lost the 2017 presidential election to President Emmanuel Macron, would garner 48 percent while Macron would be re-elected with 52 percent, according to a recent poll. Observers say that the far-right politician is now taking political advantage from a dual economic and health crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic in the country.

The European nation with a Muslim population of more than 5 million, has long been criticized for undermining basic rights of the Muslim community. Macron has recently come under scrutiny for describing Islam as "a religion that is today in crisis all over the world."

His remarks sparked anger in the Muslim world, with millions calling for a boycott of French products as they took to the streets to protest against France. His government has also failed to condemn French magazine Charlie Hebdo's republication of defamatory cartoons of Islam's prophet.

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