

German Military Under Fire Over Far-Right Plot, Abuse Scandals



Berlin, May 23 (RHC)-- The German military has come under fire over a series of scandals involving the armed forces, including the case of a racist soldier allegedly plotting an attack while posing as a Syrian refugee.

German Defense Minister Von der Leyen, the first woman in charge of the armed forces, has harshly been criticized for blaming “her own team” for the scandals in the military.

A war of words erupted between the defense chief and the military after German police arrested a 28-year-old army lieutenant, identified as Franco Albrecht, who had gained asylum by creating a false identity in his home country.

Incredibly, the soldier, who spoke no Arabic, had been accepted as a refugee and was receiving monthly state benefits. The soldier’s case came to light after Austrian police caught him with a loaded handgun at the Vienna airport in February.

The subsequent investigation found that he had created a fake identity as a Syrian fruit seller called

“David Benjamin” in 2015. Media reports said he kept “death lists” with the names of top politicians, including former president Joachim Gauck, some cabinet ministers and the Social Democrat interior minister, Heiko Maas.

Reacting to the case, the defense minister slammed the armed forces for leadership failures. She said that “the German army has an attitude problem, and it appears to have weak leadership at various levels.”

Her remarks provoked an angry response from both military figures and politicians. Soldiers also reacted angrily by saying that she had offended every honest soldier and failed to take responsibility herself.

The defense minister also canceled her planned visit to the United States to focus on the soldier’s case, according to her spokesman. The Defense Ministry is accused of failing to pay attention to repeated warnings that a small right-wing extremist group was operating within the military.

Von der Leyen has met with top military officials in Berlin to discuss ways to reform the armed forces. The military is also involved in several other recent scandals, including sexual abuse.

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