



Germany

International Religious Freedom Report 2007

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

The Basic Law (Constitution) provides for religious freedom, and the Government generally respected this right in practice with some exceptions.

There were positive developments with respect to court decisions supporting religious freedom during the period covered by this report, but important religious freedom concerns remained. Courts made favorable decisions in favor of Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientologists, and the Unification Church. Important religious concerns included the organization of Islamic religious instruction in schools; social and governmental (federal and state) treatment of certain religious minorities, notably Scientologists, Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as Muslims; and bans in certain states on the wearing of headscarves by female Muslim teachers in public schools as part of the clarification of the role and status of Islam in the country.

Right-wing extremists committed politically motivated crimes against minorities including religious groups as well as anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic acts. Cemeteries were desecrated, and Muslim communities sometimes suffered discrimination in the location of mosques and allotments of land for cemeteries. Many members of civil society engaged in discussions about Muslim integration. The Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches continued to use "sect commissioners" to warn the public of dangers from some minority religious groups such as the Unification Church, Scientologists, and Transcendental Meditation practitioners. Scientologists continue to find "sect filters" used against them in employment as well as discrimination in political party membership.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. The U.S. Government placed particular emphasis on support for direct dialogue between representatives of minority religious groups and relevant government officials.

Section I. Religious Demography

The country has an area of 137,847 square miles and a population of 82 million. There are no official statistics on religious groups; however, unofficial estimates and figures provided by religious organizations give an approximate breakdown of the membership of the country's denominations. The data below are compiled from various sources and are for 2005, which is the latest available data, unless otherwise noted.

The Roman Catholic Church has a membership of 26.2 million. The Evangelical Church, a confederation of the Lutheran, Uniate, and Reformed Protestant Churches, has 26.9 million members. Together, these two churches account for nearly two-thirds of the population.

The following list consists of other religious communities comprising more than 0.1 percent of the population. Protestant Christian denominations include: New Apostolic Church, 400,000; Ethnic German Baptists from the former Soviet Union (FSU), 300,000 to 380,000; and Baptist, 86,500. Muslims number 3.5 million (2006), including Sunnis, 2.5 million; Alevis, 410,000; and Shiites, 225,000. Of these an Interior Ministry study indicated that 4,000 native citizens converted to Islam between July 2004 and June 2005. Until 2004 the annual number of conversions was 300, largely Christian women native citizens marrying Muslim men; however, since 2004 the annual numbers of conversions have jumped into the thousands. There are approximately 2,600 Muslim places of worship, including an estimated 150 traditional architecture mosques, with 100 more mosques being planned. Orthodox Christians number 1.4 million, including Greek Orthodox/Constantinople Patriarchate, 450,000; Serbian Orthodox, 250,000; Romanian Orthodox, 300,000; and Russian Orthodox/Moscow Patriarchate, 50,000. Buddhists number 245,000, Jehovah's Witnesses 166,000, and Hindus 97,500. The Church of Scientology operates 18 churches and missions.

According to estimates, Jews number more than 200,000, of which 107,794 are registered members of the Jewish community. From 1990 to 2006, approximately 202,000 Jews and non-Jewish dependents from the countries of the FSU arrived, joining 25,000 to 30,000 Jews already in the country. As a result of a more restrictive immigration policy regarding Jews from the FSU, the number of Jewish immigrants decreased to 1,971

in 2006 from 3,124 in 2005. The new policy was designed in cooperation with Jewish organizations in order to better manage the integration of individuals into the Jewish community.

An estimated 21 million persons (one-quarter of the population) either have no religious affiliation or belong to unrecorded religious organizations.

Society is simultaneously becoming increasingly secular and religiously diverse. Regular attendance at religious services decreased. Regular attendance at Sunday Mass is reported at 15 percent for nominal Roman Catholics. Seventeen years after reunification, the eastern part of the country remains far more secular than the west. Only 5 to 10 percent of eastern citizens belong to a religious organization.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Basic Law (Constitution) provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice with some exceptions. The Federal Government sought to protect this right in full and did not tolerate its abuse either by governmental or private actors; however, discrimination against and unequal treatment of some minority religious groups remained a problem at the local level, in part because of the legal/constitutional structure of church-state relations. The structure for managing church-state relations, established in 1949, has been gradually adapting to the country's increasingly diverse religious composition.

Religious organizations are not required to register with the state, and groups may organize themselves for private religious purposes without constraint. However, most religious organizations are registered and treated as nonprofit associations, which enjoy a degree of tax-exempt status. State-level authorities review registration submissions and routinely grant tax-exempt status. Their decisions are subject to judicial review. Organizations must provide evidence, through their own statutes, history, and activities, that they are a religion. Local tax offices occasionally conduct reviews of tax-exempt status.

Religion and state are separate, although a special partnership exists between the state and those religious communities that have the status of a "corporation under public law." Any religious organization may request that it be granted "public law corporation" status, which, among other things, entitles it to name prison, hospital, and military chaplains and to levy a tithe (averaging 9 percent of income tax) on its members that the state collects. Public law corporations pay a fee to the Government for this tax service; not all avail themselves of it. The decision to grant public law corporation status is made at the state level based on certain requirements, including an assurance of permanence, the size of the organization, and an indication that the organization is not hostile to the constitutional order or fundamental rights. An estimated 180 religious groups have been granted public law corporation status, including the Evangelical and Catholic Churches, the Jewish community, Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists, Mennonites, Baptists, Methodists, Christian Scientists, and the Salvation Army. In June 2006, after a ten-year legal effort by the Jehovah's Witnesses organization, the State of Berlin granted the organization public corporation status, but other states had not done so.

The Muslim communities remained an exception. In principle, the Federal Government is in favor of the states' granting public law corporation status to Muslim communities but has indicated a desire that Muslims agree upon a single organization with which the states and the federal Government can negotiate. On April 9, 2007, in consequence, the four largest Muslim religious organizations announced the formation of the "Muslim Coordination Council." Whether and when this group would meet legal requirements for registration as a public law corporation was unclear and was to be decided on the state level; however, some observers, including the Federal Interior Minister were on record that the Muslim Coordination Council only represented approximately 10 to 15 percent of the total Muslim population, those who were traditionally observant.

Achieving public law corporation status has potential implications for Muslims in the country who wish a traditional Muslim burial, which consists of burial in a shroud, in a cemetery dedicated only to Muslim burial for eternity, and facing Mecca. These conditions conflict with either the country's law or custom, which require a coffin be buried in a cemetery in a rented plot, which will be turned over every 30 or 60 years. The state of North Rhine-Westphalia changed its laws to allow localities to determine shroud burial, but few Islamic cemeteries existed.

On May 2, 2007, the second plenary meeting of the Interior Ministry's Islamic Conference took place, after its launching on September 27, 2006, alongside the Government's parallel Integration Summit. The conference is a multiyear effort that addresses key areas of debate such as the legal status of Islam and policies such as those related to headscarves and girls' participation in athletic activities. It is an attempt to bring together representatives from the wide spectrum of the Muslim community, from the very traditional to the nearly secular. **The conference can claim the increased public attention to Muslim integration as a major success. It is also debating the form of representation of the diverse Muslim community in negotiations with the Government about the role of Islam in society. On the core government demand that Muslims accept the**

social values of the country, there was no consensus among Muslims. Participants, however, remained committed to the process and expected progress in the long run.

The Government provides subsidies to some religious organizations for historical and cultural reasons. In view of the country's culpability for the Holocaust, the states have accepted as a permanent duty the obligation to provide financial support to the Jewish community, including support for reconstruction of old and construction of new synagogues. Repairs to and restoration of some Christian churches and monasteries expropriated by the state in 1803 are financed by the Government. Newer church buildings and mosques do not generally receive subsidies for maintenance or construction. State governments also subsidize various institutions affiliated with public law corporations, such as religious schools and hospitals, which provide public services.

The 2003 "State Agreement on Cooperation" between the Federal Government and the Central Council of Jews agrees to supplement the funding received by the Jewish community from the states. Approximately \$3.99 million (€3 million) is provided annually to the Central Council to maintain Jewish cultural heritage, to build up the Jewish community, and to support integration and social work. The Central Council reports annually to the Government on the use of the funds. The agreement emphasizes that the Central Council of Jews is meant to support all branches of Judaism with the funds provided.

Most public schools offer Protestant and Catholic religious instruction in cooperation with those churches, as well as instruction in Judaism if enough students express interest. The number of Islamic religion classes in public schools continued to grow. In principle, participants of the federal government-sponsored Islam Conference agreed that Islamic education should be made widely available. Education is a state responsibility and, in part because no nationally recognized Islamic organization exists that could assist in developing a curriculum or providing services, the form and content of Islamic instruction vary from state to state. Organizations providing Islamic instruction do not have public law corporation status.

Depending on the state, a nonreligious ethics course or study hall may be available for students not wishing to participate in religious instruction. Beginning in the fall of 2006, Berlin required participation in ethics class for middle school students and above, in addition to voluntary participation in religious instruction.

Islam classes in public schools were a controversial topic but were increasingly common throughout the country, except in areas where the Muslim population was too small to support them. Although no Islamic group had "Public Law Corporation" status that would entitle them to offer Islam courses, state governments recognized the need and demand for such courses and worked with local Muslim organizations to establish such courses. The details of the curriculum are worked out by the state government on a local basis. Commonly, the courses are taught in German, although in a few states Islamic instruction in Turkish is also offered. The number of such classes (now in the hundreds) has expanded rapidly in recent years. To provide teachers for these classes, training programs have been established at several universities. However, there was still a shortage of qualified teachers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the offerings have been well-received and are well-attended.

The legal obligation that children attend a school, confirmed by the Constitutional Court on May 31, 2006, and the European Court of Justice on September 11, 2006, and the related ban on homeschooling, was a problem for certain groups, such as Baptists from the former Soviet Union in Eastern Westphalia, due to concerns about sex education and the teaching of evolution. Generally, state authorities permitted such groups to establish charter-type schools.

There were no new developments in the Ministry of Defense efforts to develop a Muslim chaplaincy, which have failed because of an inability to reach agreement on a plan with the multiple Muslim groups. Independently, the Ministry has developed a code of conduct to facilitate the practice of Islam by an estimated 3,000 Muslim soldiers, which remained in effect.

On August 18, 2006, Parliament complied with a 2000 EU directive by enacting the General Act on Equal Treatment. The antidiscrimination law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, ethnic origin, or race but also goes beyond EU guidelines to include discrimination based on religion, disability, age, and sexual identity. In 2002 the Federal Constitutional Court defined the Government's "warning" function with respect to nontraditional religions, ruling that the Government could characterize nontraditional religions as "sects," "youth religions," and "youth sects," and is allowed to provide accurate information about them to the public. However, the Government may not defame these religious groups by using terms such as "destructive," "pseudo-religion," or "manipulative."

Over the last decade the Church of Scientology has filed legal challenges against many of the public and private practices used to discriminate against Scientologists in public and private life. These have included suits against the observation of the Church by state Offices for the Protection of the Constitution (OPC), against the use of the so-called "sect-filter," and against workplace discrimination. Many of these suits have been resolved at the initial level in favor of the Church; it has lost others. In nearly all cases, the initial decision was appealed by the losing side and final decisions are still pending. In some cases, the Church has argued that the losing party did not

comply with court decisions in good faith and has gone back to court. Final, nationally binding legal decisions on the many issues before the courts remained years away.

Since March 1, 2005, applicants for citizenship in Bavaria have been required to fill out a questionnaire regarding their affiliation with organizations under observation by the state OPC, including Scientology.

On June 4, 2007, the Government lifted the ban on travel for Reverend Moon in keeping with a May court ruling. On May 4, 2007, the Higher Administrative Court of Koblenz ruled that the entry exclusion (refusal to issue a visitor's visa) for the founder of the Unification Church, Reverend Sun Myung Moon, and his wife, Hak Ja Han Moon, should be lifted along with their listing in the Schengen Information System. On October 24, 2006, the Federal Constitutional Court rejected the Federal Interior Ministry's rationale for its 1995 immigration exclusion and the failure to issue a visa, which was based on the Government's characterization of Reverend Moon and his wife as leaders of a "cult" that endangered the personal and social development of young persons.

On March 21, 2007, a judge was removed from the case of a Muslim woman's request for an expedited divorce (a waiver of the normal 12-month waiting period) after denying relief from court costs and arguing, in part, that wife-beating is part of Islamic culture. A wide spectrum of society, including government officials, denounced the decision as unfounded in German law and contrary to the norms of German society. The status of the case was not publicly resolved at the end of the reporting period.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice at the federal level contributed to the generally free practice of religion. Some state governments and federal agencies did not recognize certain belief systems, including Scientology, as a religion; however, the absence of recognition did not prevent their adherents from engaging in public and private religious activities.

Still pending in 2007 was the decision before the Higher Administrative Court in Muenster, regarding the Church of Scientology appeal of a 2004 Cologne court ruling, which stated that OPC observation was justified and could continue. The ruling of the Higher Administrative Court in Muenster will affect federal OPC activities, potentially affecting Scientologists nationwide. The Church of Scientology remained under observation (as it has been since 1997) by the federal and seven state OPCs, based on a stated concern that the Church's teachings and practices are opposed to the democratic constitutional order or violate human rights. However, in recent years many state OPCs have opted to stop their observations of Scientology; exceptions included Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, and Lower Saxony.

Several states publish pamphlets about Scientology (and other religious groups) that detail the Church's ideology and practices. States defend the practice by noting their responsibility to respond to citizens' requests for information about Scientology as well as other subjects. The pamphlets warn of the dangers the Church poses to democracy, the legal system, and human rights.

In response to concerns about Scientology's ideology and practices, government agencies at the federal and state level and private sector entities established rules or procedures that discriminate against Scientology as an organization and/or against individual members of the Church.

On June 25, 2007, the Ministry of Defense indicated that it would bar Tom Cruise, a producer and actor, if he were to appear in a film about a war hero who stood up against the Nazis. A spokesman for Germany's Ministry of Defense issued a statement that "Producers will not be allowed to film a German military site if Count Stauffenberg is played by Tom Cruise, who has publicly professed to being a member of" the Church of Scientology. After unfavorable international reaction, other sources at the Ministry indicated Cruise would be welcome to film, but some sites were not to be used in order to protect the solemnity of memorial sites.

On March 27, 2007, Minister-President of Baden-Wuerttemberg Guenther Oettinger demanded that actor and Scientologist John Travolta be uninvited from a guest appearance on "Wanna Bet?" a popular television show seen by an average of approximately 13 million viewers. Oettinger expressed concern that Travolta might use the show as an opportunity to promote Scientology. Travolta appeared on the show as scheduled, agreeing beforehand not to mention the controversial topic.

In March 2007 after the establishment of a Scientology center in Freiburg, the city's Christian Democratic council members drafted a city council resolution labeling Scientology a "major threat to the citizens and public life in Freiburg." The draft resolution also stated that involvement with the organization "threatens economic ruin and mental breakdown" and poses particular danger to "children, youth, young adults, and mentally unstable persons." An official from the Baden-Wuerttemberg OPC commented in a newspaper interview that "we are of the

view that Scientology pursues anticonstitutional goals," adding that a ban on the religion was "under discussion."

In 2006 and 2007 Scientologists continued to report instances of societal and official discrimination. For example, on March 6, 2007, Hannover's Lord Mayor asked real estate agents and property owners to avoid supporting the Church of Scientology by refusing to sell or rent the organization a building in the city where they could found a branch office, saying "Scientologists are explicitly undesired in Hannover." The Lord Mayor conceded that the city's legal leeway to prevent the settlement was limited.

On January 13, 2007, the Church of Scientology celebrated the opening of a large, new Scientology Center in Berlin. There were indications that the city of Berlin refused for political reasons to issue permits to the Church to mark the opening with a parade and outdoor rally. The opening also provoked media scrutiny and political commentary; for example, local politicians expressed concern in the press that the Scientology center would endanger the well-being of residents.

A large number of Muslim organizations, including some that profess to be engaged in specifically and solely peaceful religious, social and/or cultural activities, were under observation by state and federal OPCs.

Since June 2007 a modified questionnaire has been distributed in Baden-Wuerttemberg to those seeking to become naturalized citizens. The questions previously in the 2006 version about sexual orientation were removed and the new content addresses attitudes on illegal activities such as membership in an extremist organization and forced marriages. Also, the questions are now directed to all immigrants and not just Muslims. The new version of the questionnaire has been approved by Muslim associations. Previously authorities in Baden-Wuerttemberg required residents seeking naturalization to complete a questionnaire concerning their political and moral beliefs and their adherence to the Constitution. The questionnaire led to protests from the political opposition and from independents such as Paul Spiegel, then chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. Muslim organizations in Baden-Wuerttemberg announced plans to take the issue to the Federal Constitutional Court. Critics viewed the questionnaire, which included questions on attitudes toward women's and gay rights, terrorism, and other social issues, as discriminating against Muslim immigrants.

By June 30, 2007, eight states enacted laws banning female Muslim teachers from wearing headscarves at work, when the Federal Constitutional Court cleared the way in 2003 for the state legislation. New legislation generally used language that could be applied to wearing any symbol that could be taken as a rejection of constitutional values or as a symbol of oppression.

In February 2007 the Bremen higher administrative court nullified the lower court's July 2006 decision that the suspension of a teacher who wore a headscarf was discriminatory and ruled that the Bremen school law's ban on the wearing of headscarves was constitutional. In a June 2006 appeal the Bremen administrative court had called on the Education Ministry to prove that a trainee teacher wearing her headscarf would concretely jeopardize school peace.

On January 15, 2007, the Bavarian Constitutional Court upheld a ban on Muslim teachers wearing headscarves in school while allowing teaching nuns to continue to wear habits and added that the application of the law did not violate religious freedom and was not discriminatory.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees in the country.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor United States citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Anti-Semitism

The activities of right-wing extremist organizations, whose platforms include anti-Semitism among other forms of intolerance, increased significantly. The Jewish community reported a marked increase in anti-Semitic sentiment and an extremely difficult atmosphere for the country's Jews, especially during the July-August conflict involving Israel and Hezbollah. In some cases anti-Semitic acts were perpetrated by persons of Muslim heritage.

Illustrating this anti-Semitic sentiment, 45 percent of respondents answered "probably true" to the following statement in an Anti-Defamation League poll taken in 2007: "Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust."

According to the 2006 OPC report, the total number of registered anti-Semitic crimes dropped from 1,658 in 2005

to 1,636 in 2006 (a 1.3 percent decrease). Among these, the number of violent crimes dropped from 49 to 43. This was at apparent odds with the reports by the Jewish community. There were also reports of anti-Semitic graffiti that included the use of swastikas. The Stephen Roth Institute Report on Anti-Semitism Worldwide for 2006 mentioned the country in the context of violence and anti-Semitic acts, indicating that "acts of violence remained high," with anti-Semitic acts reported regularly, mainly "harassment," and cemetery vandalizing as well as the desecration of Holocaust monuments. Federal authorities generally responded to combat anti-Semitic offenses.

Desecration of Jewish cemeteries or other monuments was the most widespread anti-Semitic act. For example, on March 8, 2007, 63 tombstones were destroyed at a Jewish cemetery in Diesbeck. Two men were arrested in connection with this act. In 2006 authorities conducted 257 investigations of such incidents and made 29 arrests.

On March 8, 2007, a court in Magdeburg sentenced five men to fines and nine months of probation for the burning on June 24, 2006, of *The Diary of Anne Frank* at a summer festival in Pretzien, a small town in the eastern part of the country; however, two were acquitted for lack of evidence. In late November 2006, prosecutors had charged seven suspected neo-Nazis with incitement and disturbing the peace of the dead for burning the copy of Anne Frank's diary.

On February 25, 2007, a Jewish kindergarten in Berlin-Charlottenburg was the target of an anti-Semitic assault by Nazi sympathizers. The perpetrators defaced the building with swastikas and slogans recalling the horrors of the Holocaust and threw a smoke bomb into the kindergarten, which did not ignite. Police advertised a reward for information about the perpetrators, placed the site under increased protection, and continued to investigate.

In October 2006 several adolescents in Parey (Saxony-Anhalt) forced a classmate to walk in the school yard wearing a large sign during lunch recess which read, "In this town I'm the biggest swine because of the Jewish friends of mine," a phrase used during the Nazi era to humiliate citizens with Jewish spouses or friends.

On September 26, 2006, the players of the Jewish club TuS Makkabi Berlin stopped a soccer game as a result of taunts and the singing of anti-Semitic songs by spectators.

Authorities strongly condemned all anti-Semitic acts and devoted significant resources to investigating incidents and prosecuting perpetrators. Authorities ran a variety of tolerance-education programs, many focusing on anti-Semitism and xenophobia. The programs received input and assistance from the Jewish community and organizations. The state also provided 24-hour police protection at synagogues and many other Jewish institutions.

Improvements and Positive Developments in Respect for Religious Freedom

Several notable court decisions in 2006 and 2007 (see Legal/Policy Framework section) demonstrated that previous cases were resolved in case law establishing new policy in favor of religious freedom when implemented.

The Federal Government promoted tolerance by establishing dialogues with representatives of immigrant and Muslim groups at the Chancellor and Interior Minister levels on the integration of minorities and immigrants and on Islamic matters.

The Government monitored right wing extremists, conducted investigations into anti-Semitic crimes, and at times banned extremist groups deemed a threat to public order. Authorities sought to address right-wing extremism by conducting a variety of education programs to promote tolerance, many focusing on anti-Semitism.

The Government permitted the Church of Scientology to open a new center in Berlin in December 2006.

The city-state of Berlin accorded public corporation status to the Jehovah's Witnesses in June 2006, but it was not reported in some quarters until July 2006.

Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination

There were reports of continuing societal discrimination and hostility towards some minority religious groups (see Section II).

In 2006 the federal OPC recorded 17,597 right-wing extremist "politically motivated crimes" (PMCs), which included 1,047 violent crimes. The Federal Criminal Investigation Office (BKA) defines "politically motivated crimes" as offenses related to the victims' ideology, nationality, ethnicity, race, skin color, religion, worldview,

ancestry, sexual orientation, disability status, the parents, or social status. The 2006 OPC report included 2,369 left-wing PMCs, 477 PMCs by foreigners, and 168 other types of PMCs. The report listed 182 right-wing extremist organizations and groups (183 in 2005). Authorities estimated membership in these groups, plus right wing extremists who remain unorganized, to be approximately 38,600.

A degree of anti-Semitism based on religious doctrines and historic anti-Jewish prejudice continued to exist. Far-right political organizations added claims that Jews were behind modern social and economic trends, such as globalization, which some Germans find disorienting or dangerous. While most anti-Semitic acts were attributed to neo-Nazi or other right-wing extremist groups or persons, recent anti-Semitic incidents indicated that Arab youths were increasingly behind attacks on and harassment of Jews.

Jewish nongovernmental organizations, such as the Central Council of Jews, provided input and assistance on a variety of government-sponsored tolerance education programs focusing on anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

The rise of a substantial Muslim minority at times led to social conflict with religious, ethnic, and cultural overtones. Commonly, this included local resistance to the construction of mosques, leasing land for Muslim cemeteries, or disagreements over whether Muslims may use loudspeakers in residential neighborhoods to call believers to prayer. Authorities argued that many disputes also appeared to be related to compliance with construction and zoning laws; private groups (with some Interior Ministry financing) sought to better educate Muslim groups about these laws. Muslim groups, however, argued that such rules were often abused or that local opposition was motivated by anti-Muslim bias. Nonreligious (for example, noise and traffic levels) and security concerns were also factors.

At the end of the period covered by this report, controversy over the construction of a new mosque in Cologne, in North Rhine-Westphalia, gained national and international attention. The proposed new mosque, in addition to being the country's largest, would also house the national headquarters of the Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB). It has the full support of the mainstream local political players, including the city's mayor and the state minister-president. On June 16, 2007, the far-right, anti-immigrant populist party, Pro-Koeln, heightened an antimosque campaign, launched the previous month, with a downtown procession. Previous attempts by Pro-Koeln to block or protest construction of the mosque included circulating an antimosque petition among residents and disrupting a town hall meeting.

A prominent Jewish author and Holocaust survivor, Ralph Giordano, received death threats for his opposition to the mosque and was quoted as saying, "What kind of state are we in that I can face a fatwa in Germany?" Giordano's criticism of the mosque project brought the issue to greater national attention. Due to Pro-Koeln's framing of the mosque's construction as an attack on German values much controversy was generated by the building; however, most mosque building projects proceeded without controversy.

On March 21, 2007, a dump truck caught fire, prompting allegations of arson at the building site of the first mosque in the former Eastern half of the country (in a Berlin neighborhood, Heinersdorf). In January 2007 the construction of the Ahmadiyya Muslim mosque began after approval on December 22, 2006, despite protests from residents and widespread community and political opposition, in part because of questions about the sponsoring group's funding sources and sociopolitical orientation. Residents of the area complained that because very few Muslims live in the area, there would be a large influx of commuters from other neighborhoods in Berlin. Police were investigating the fire.

Local opposition in Munich delayed plans to build a new mosque there, even though the mayor and the Catholic Church across the street from the building site supported its construction. In December 2006 the Christian Social Union of Bavaria's minister-president, Edmund Stoiber, took actions to invalidate a preliminary permit that had been issued by the Munich government, a coalition of Social Democrats and Greens. The community was divided against the building of the mosque with the more conservative elements objecting to it.

In April 2007 SWR became the first broadcasting station in the country to broadcast an ongoing Islamic religious program, known as *Islamic Word*. Conservative political circles in Baden-Wuerttemberg sharply criticized the German-language broadcast.

There also remained areas where the law and Islamic practices conflicted with one another, such as the call to prayer, Islamic ritual slaughtering, and the segregation of older boys and girls during sports classes.

Beyond the Government's actions, the Catholic Church, and especially the Evangelical Church, have been public opponents of Scientology. Evangelical "Commissioners for Religious and Ideological Issues," also known as "sect commissioners," were particularly active in this regard. Additionally, several public and private organizations issued public warnings about Scientology afterschool study programs. The sect commissioners investigate "sects, cults, and psycho-groups" and publicize what they consider to be the dangers of these groups to the public. Evangelical sect commissioners were especially active in their efforts to warn the public about alleged dangers

posed by the Unification Church, Scientology, Bhagwan-Osho, and Transcendental Meditation. The print and internet literature of the sect commissioners portrayed these groups as "totalitarian," "pseudo-religious," and "fraudulent." Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Christ, Christian Scientists, the New Apostolic Church, and the Johannish Church were characterized in less negative terms but nevertheless were included in the Church's webpage on "sects." The Catholic Church also employed similar commissioners, who generally restricted their activities to providing counsel to individuals with questions about "sects."

Following the July 20, 2006, written order by the Hamburg Administrative Court, penalizing violations in the amount of \$13,300 (€10,000) of the injunction against sect filters, Scientologists nevertheless were able to find eight copies of sect filters in use in the country in 2006. The Scientologists believed that companies continued to use such filters because they have been promoted and supported by the Hamburg government and other state governments such as Bavaria, leading to pressure to use them in the private sector.

Since the 1990s, four of the major political parties--the Christian Democratic Union, the Christian Social Union, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), and the Free Democratic Party (FDP)--have banned Scientologists from party membership. Scientologists have unsuccessfully challenged these bans in courts.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights, including the status of Islamic education and attitudes toward the Muslim community. The U.S. Mission has extensive contact with all religious groups in the country and meets frequently at multiple levels with representatives of religious groups to discuss their situation and concerns.

In response to anti-Semitic crimes, members of the U.S. Embassy closely followed the Government's responses and expressed the U.S. Government's opposition to anti-Semitism. Mission officers maintained contact with Jewish groups and continued to monitor closely the incidence of anti-Semitic activity.

The U.S. Government expressed its concerns over infringement of individual rights because of religious affiliation with respect to Scientology and other minority religious groups and requested that the Government implement or encourage the states to apply immediately all court rulings in favor of minority religious groups.

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