
Germany Doesn't Support Racism Victims, Official Report Says

By: Telesur
09/06/2020



Germany's Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (ADS) Tuesday presented an annual report acknowledging that racism is a persistent problem in the country and calling for a reform of the Equal Treatment Act and a notable improvement to victim help mechanisms.

Germany has "an ongoing problem with racial discrimination and does not give enough consistent legal support to victims," the ADS Acting Director Bernhard Franke said.

Between 2018 and 2019, requests for legal advice received by this federal agency increased from 1,070 to 1,176, the 33 percent of which were related to racial discrimination issues.

Last week, Chancellor Angela Merkel made statements acknowledging that racism is still a public problem in her country.

"Racism has always existed," Merkel said, recalling that in Germany "there are racist attacks, blacks suffer discrimination, the kipa is ripped from the Jews' heads."

"Violence, hatred, and agitation are only the tip of the iceberg of racist attitudes and resentment, which become apparent much earlier in acts of everyday discrimination," local outlet InfoMigrants commented.

"The report cites ads for rented apartments that stipulate 'no foreigners,' the discotheque where some are told that 'people like you' always cause trouble, and bosses who say a colleague who made a racist joke 'didn't really mean it'," it added.

In 3,580 consultations on discrimination cases, the ADS observed that citizens' requests for advice were related to issues that the current Equal Treatment Act does not adequately cover.

For this reason, this federal agency demanded a legislative reform and the creation of offices to monitor discrimination in eight states that do not yet have them.

The ADS acting director applauded the recent passage of an anti-racism law in Berlin city, which allows citizens to claim compensation if they are discriminated against by the police or educational institutions.

Germany's Interior Minister Horst Seehofer and the Police, however, opined that Berlin's law places the security forces "under widespread suspicion".

Franke rejected this criticism and explained that the local law does not exempt the complainant from providing data that makes the discriminatory treatment credible.

He also mentioned that if discrimination extends to all spheres of society, it would be "naïve" to exclude the security forces.

Finally, the ADS acting director recalled that the COVID-19 pandemic is operating as a new pretext for acts of discrimination against people.

"The crisis is exacerbating injustice and discrimination and we look again at the search for scapegoats to blame for the pandemic," he said, referring to reported cases of racism against Asian-looking people.
