
Refugees, Immigrants Met with Racist Violence Across Europe

23/10/2015



Refugees fleeing war and violence continue to be received with hostility in Europe, as two people were killed in Sweden by an anti-immigrant white supremacist and 13 people were detained in Germany in a possible plot to attack refugees on Thursday.

The police carried out a series of raids in Bavaria, resulting in the arrest of 13 people and seizure of detonators, guns and knives, in what authorities say might have prevented an attack on refugees.

The suspects had planned to throw detonators into two refugee shelters in the German town, state prosecutor in Bamberg, Erik Ohlenschlager, told local news.

The intercepted attack comes after a pro-refugee politician running for mayor in Cologne was stabbed by a right-wing extremist Oct. 17.

Right-wing plot are not a new development in Germany; there has been a recent trend in anti-refugee attacks. Almost 580 attacks on asylum facilities have been recorded this year alone, according to the Federal Criminal Police Office.

Meanwhile, the xenophobic climate dominating Europe turned lethal in Sweden Thursday after a white supremacist terror attack at a school killed two people.

Local media reported that the victims were 15-year-old student Ahmed Hassan and 20-year-old teaching assistant Lavin Eskandar.

Hassan was a Somali refugee who arrived in Sweden with his parents in 2012.

“We can confirm that this was a racially motivated hate crime partially because the man chose his victims based on

the color of their skin," Police chief, Niclas Hallgren, told Swedish public service radio.

The shooter reportedly liked and shared movies celebrating Nazi Germany and was a supporter for the Sweden Democrats, an anti-immigrant political party rooted in Nazism.

While Sweden holds an international reputation as a tolerant country devoid of racism, hate crimes against the country's Black population has increased by more than 40 percent between 2008 and 2014, according to the National Crime Prevention Council.

Both Swedish and German authorities have distanced themselves from the surge in racist attacks but critics have pointed out that these acts cannot be divorced from the institutionalization of racism upheld by hostile discourse against people of color.

The legitimization of anti-refugee practices through racist discourse was mostly recently criticized on Thursday by the U.N. human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini in the case of the Czech Republic.

Al-Husseini accused the Eastern European country for committing systematic human rights violations by detaining refugees for up to 90 days and strip-searching them for money to pay for their own detention. He said this policy is fomented by "Islamophobic" statements by Czech President Milos Zeman.

The head of state has said multiple times that the arrival of refugees threatens the country with "Islamic fundamentalism." Zeman said, "we will lose women's beauty because they will be covered head to toe in burqas, with only a fabric net over the face."
