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Jewish Leaders Around World Unite Call for Action Against Antisemitism After Germany Synagogue Attack

a by Algemeiner Staff and JNS.org



Mourners gather at the market square in Halle, Germany on Oct. 10, 2019, after two people were killed in a shooting. Photo: Reuters / Hannibal Henschke.

Top Jewish leaders around the world issued messages of solidarity and calls for action after a neo-Nazi **gunned down two people** and injured several others in Halle, Germany, on Wednesday, during the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur.

The assailant, who has been identified as Stephan Balliet, 27, first attempted to break into a synagogue, but was unable to open the massive wooden doors, which were bolted shut.

After failing to gain entry to the synagogue, Balliet shot a passerby, a woman in her 50s. Minutes later he attacked a nearby kebab shop with bombs and improvised weapons, killing one. Balliet live streamed the attack on Twitch, with the 35-minute video being viewed by 2,200 people in the 30 minutes before it was taken down, according to the video platform.





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The president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Josef Schuster, noted on Wednesday that “we have not experienced an incident of this kind ever before in Germany.”

“It shows that right-wing extremism is not only some kind of political development, but that it is highly dangerous and exactly the kind of danger that we have always warned against,” he added.

Jewish Agency chief Isaac Herzog said in response to the incident that “the entire world sees and hears what is happening and must understand that there can be no compromise in the fight against hatred of Jews and anti-Semitism.”

Herzog said the Jewish Agency would support Halle’s Jewish community.

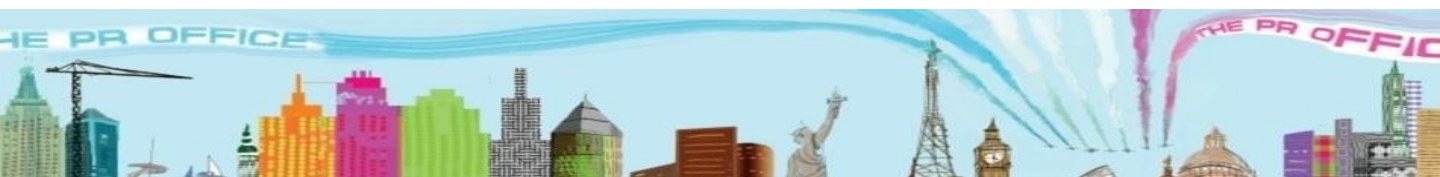
“We share in the mourning of the families whose loved ones were murdered, wish the wounded a speedy recovery and send strength to the worshipers and members of the community who are in deep mourning,” he said.

Herzog went on to say that he had spoken with German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, “who expressed his deep disturbance regarding the attack on the synagogue in Halle, saying, ‘This is an attack on all of us. We all stand together on the frontlines against anti-Semitism.’”

Orthodox Union Executive Vice President Allen Fagin said in a statement that this “senseless act of anti-Semitic violence was not only a heinous attack on the Jewish community of Halle, but ... yet another example of anti-Semitism in Germany, which continues to proliferate. Every Jew has the right to practice their religion without fear of being a victim of terror.”

An attack on one Jew is an attack on all, said Fagin, adding that “our prayers and thoughts are with our brethren in Halle.”

Chief Rabbi of Berlin Yehudah Teichtal said, “We stand alongside the community that has been harmed and weep over those murdered. The cruel method of the attacker is indescribable, and especially the fact that it happened on Yom Kippur, the holiest day for the Jewish people.”





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He said he learned about the attack in the middle of the Yom Kippur prayers.

“A senior security official approached me in the middle of the Musaf prayer and informed me of the attack. Immediately, the security of our synagogue was increased, alongside other synagogues,” reported the Chabad rabbi.

“We talked about the attack with our synagogue worshipers. We emphasized the great miracle the community had because their door was locked, thus avoiding a much more serious incident, and of course, strengthened their spirit, with a prayer for a year of good news.”

World Jewish Congress President Ronald Lauder issued a statement, saying, “It is appalling that on this day — the holiest in the Jewish calendar — when Jews are sitting in synagogues all around the world immersed in prayer, yet another attack against Jews has been perpetrated.”

Lauder added: “We are heartened that the German security services reacted so swiftly to this attack, and thank Dr. Felix Klein, commissioner for Jewish life in Germany and the fight against antisemitism, and the German authorities for their ongoing support, but now we need action not words. Unfortunately the time has come when all Jewish places of worship and Jewish communal sites need to have enhanced round-the-clock security provided by state security services. We also need immediately to launch a unified front against neo-Nazi and other extremist groups, which threaten our well-being. The fact that, 75 years after the Holocaust, such groups are gaining influence in Germany speaks volumes. We stand with the Jewish community of Germany at this tragic time.”

Rabbi Abraham Cooper — associate dean of the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center — stated, “Terrorism and hate attacks are now featuring ‘live streaming’ as a key part of their strategies to spread fear and recruit.”

“That the world’s most powerful social media platforms, along with Twitter and others allow for the hijacking of services by terrorists and bigots is intolerable” he continued. “What else needs to happen before these powerful marketing services institute time-delay and other technical means to stop this burgeoning deadly social media activity.”

“Clearly whatever protocols — if any — are in place, these giants who are an integral part of daily life of billions of people, must address this challenge, or Washington and other governments will,” Cooper concluded.





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Chief Rabbi of Moscow Pinchas Goldschmidt — president of the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) — said Wednesday’s attack “should be a wake-up call for all those who follow the extreme Right in Germany and across Europe.”

‘Furthermore, it is shocking to understand from the Central Council of Jews in Germany that the synagogue was not adequately protected,’ he stated. “This should not and cannot happen. Governments must deliver on their promise of never again.”

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin tweeted that he was “stunned and pained by the terrible anti-Semitic murders in Germany today, during the holiest and most important day of the year for all Jews around the world.”

He called on “the leaders of Germany and the free world to bring the full force of law against anti-Semitism and its results.”

A statement from the Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem said:

“Yad Vashem strongly condemns the antisemitic attack yesterday against the Jewish community of Halle, Germany. This latest occurrence is yet another reminder that antisemitism is still alarmingly evident worldwide. Yad Vashem deeply identifies and sympathizes with the victims and their families.”

“The leadership of the international community must declare that in our post-Holocaust global society, there is no room for antisemitism, racism or xenophobia. We at Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, are particularly sensitive to the toxic dangers of antisemitism, in its many forms and contexts, and to its destructive implications — not only for Jews, but for all of civilized society. Yad Vashem, has learned, and ardently teaches, about the painful truth of the fragility of democratic societies, and the need to perpetually buttress their effective commitment to tolerance, pluralism and human rights.”

<https://www.algemeiner.com/2019/10/10/jewish-leaders-around-world-unite-call-for-action-against-antisemitism-after-germany-synagogue-attack/>

