



# "Crime in Germany under the influence of global crises and conflicts?"

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Which challenges will the police have to  
face?

Summary

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In a globalised world crises and conflicts are increasingly losing their local or regional character. In an ever faster and more direct way, the consequences that are entailed are tangible in other parts of the world, too. Currently there are two aspects which show the consequences for the security situation in Germany:

The attacks and attempted attacks in recent months have made it clear that Germany and Europe remain in the focus of activities pursued by terrorist groups. These are committed by jihad returnees, by attackers smuggled into Europe for this very purpose and by home-grown terrorists and are directed at soft targets, affect people's everyday routine and ways of living. With an ever increasing number of military defeats being suffered by the self-styled Islamic State in Syria and Iraq attacks of "western targets" arousing heightened media attention may gain in significance to maintain the organisation's reputation - also in relation to other terrorist groups.

At the same time, the war conflicts, especially those in the Middle East, contribute to a strong worldwide increase in the number of refugees. Since 2015 Germany has received more than one million refugees, many of whom originate from Syria and Iraq. There is hardly any other issue which influences the societal discourse as much as the question of what will happen to these people now and in future and tightens areas of contrasting contexts in society, which - in turn - may have an impact of the crime situation. For example, the number of offences, inter alia attacks against asylum seekers' accommodations, committed by right-wing extremists, has risen sharply.

Immigrants, too, include people who engage in criminal activities on German soil. The offences committed most are bodily harm, shoplifting and fare dodging. In some cases, however, we have also identified links to organised crime and/or gang structures similar to those found in the field of organised crime. By contrast, the absolute majority of refugees commits no punishable acts, as has been confirmed by all our surveys.

The threat situation caused by Islamist terrorism and the incidents and developments in the "refugee crisis" have a clear impact on the citizens' sense of security. In particular, the fear of terrorist attacks has grown strongly.

All this reflects the challenges which the security authorities in Germany, in Europe and worldwide will have to tackle. The past two years have been an intense stress test for us, which has shown, where our systems work and where the vulnerabilities are, which we will now have to eliminate. In this context, three points should be highlighted:

Firstly: It has become evident that our information infrastructure at both national and international level has several shortcomings which prevent us from meeting current and future challenges. Incompatible IT infrastructures, the large gaps in the biometric capability of our search systems and outmoded, complicated data protection rules are the reasons for our inability to pool all pieces of information held on one and the same person at various places in Europe in 2016. Here we will have to improve and/or re-design our systems, co-ordinate them in a better way and make them work more efficiently for the users - for example, police officers carrying out checks.

Secondly: Since national borders are losing in significance police authorities increasingly depend on cross-border co-operation to be successful. We will have to intensify the co-operation with our partners in Europe and all over the world by bilateral or multilateral approaches, such as the Joint Investigation Teams, but also by strengthening the role of Europol as a co-ordinating agency, in particular in the field of counter-terrorism.

For the Bundeskriminalamt this also means that we will have to re-define our role as a central agency and develop a three-dimensional approach, which -besides involving the German federal and Land authorities - promotes interaction at European level.

Thirdly: The capability gaps we have identified need to be shut. Where offences are committed digitally we must be able to investigate digitally, secure traces and evidence digitally. We must join forces - both at national and international level - to launch the technological,

tactical and organisational innovations required for this purpose. Here I see the BKA as a central service provider, especially in the IT field, which - upon consultation with the European partners - develops solutions satisfying high technical standards and serving the needs of all German police forces.

Also in the digital world must the police appear and be perceived as a competent and trusting contact - not least in order to safeguard the traditionally high trust of the population in our competence and integrity.

If we make continuous progress in these fields we will be well-equipped for dealing with changing crime phenomena and potential effects of global crises and conflicts. The resources, which we received and will receive for this purpose, will be invested into current key issues and into the strengthening of the police network as a whole - in the sense of our modern understanding of a central agency and our strategic orientation.

Moreover, the Bundeskriminalamt has adapted its organisational structures to be able to respond to changing challenges in a quicker and more flexible way in the future. Based on this organisation it is now important to address the key issues for the next few years - for example the fight against Islamist terrorism and the extension of our project-oriented approach aimed at the successful combat of organised crime and cybercrime.