ISS GLOBAL / DAILY INCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Germany: arrests in an alleged synagogue-attack plot

Arrests and searches in Germany following allegations of planned attacks on Jewish sites

REPORTING / REVIEW WINDOW

26 November 2026, 00:00–23:59:59 Europe/London. Information cut-off: 26 November 2026, 23:59:59 GMT.

ISSUE DATE

2026-11-27

German federal prosecutors announced two arrests and searches at 17 properties in an investigation into an alleged organisation and planned attacks. The public account describes suspected activity at synagogues in Cologne and another European city in March 2026; it does not report a completed attack.

This candidate was selected from reporting published on 26 November. The Federal Public Prosecutor's Office supplied a detailed primary account of the operation; German public-broadcast reporting and Reuters added same-day context. Allegations below remain attributed to their source. [1] [2] [3] [4]

01 / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What happened and its threat significance

COUNTRY	WHERE	WHEN
Germany	Arrests in Cologne and Heidelberg. Prosecutors describe alleged target activity at synagogues in Cologne and another European city. [1]	Arrests and searches announced on 26 November 2026; the arrest warrants were issued on 18 November. The alleged synagogue visits are placed in late March 2026. [1]

What happened

The Federal Public Prosecutor's Office announced two arrests on suspicion of membership in a domestic terrorist organisation and court-ordered searches at 17 properties. It alleges that unidentified people visited two synagogues in late March, probably carrying explosive devices, but that the plan was not carried out. [1]

Threat significance

ISS Global assessment. The case raises a serious protective-security concern for Jewish institutions and shows the reach of a multi-state investigation. The public record supports scrutiny of the alleged organisation while leaving the identities, conduct and evidence behind the reported target visits open to examination.

> EXECUTIVE JUDGEMENT
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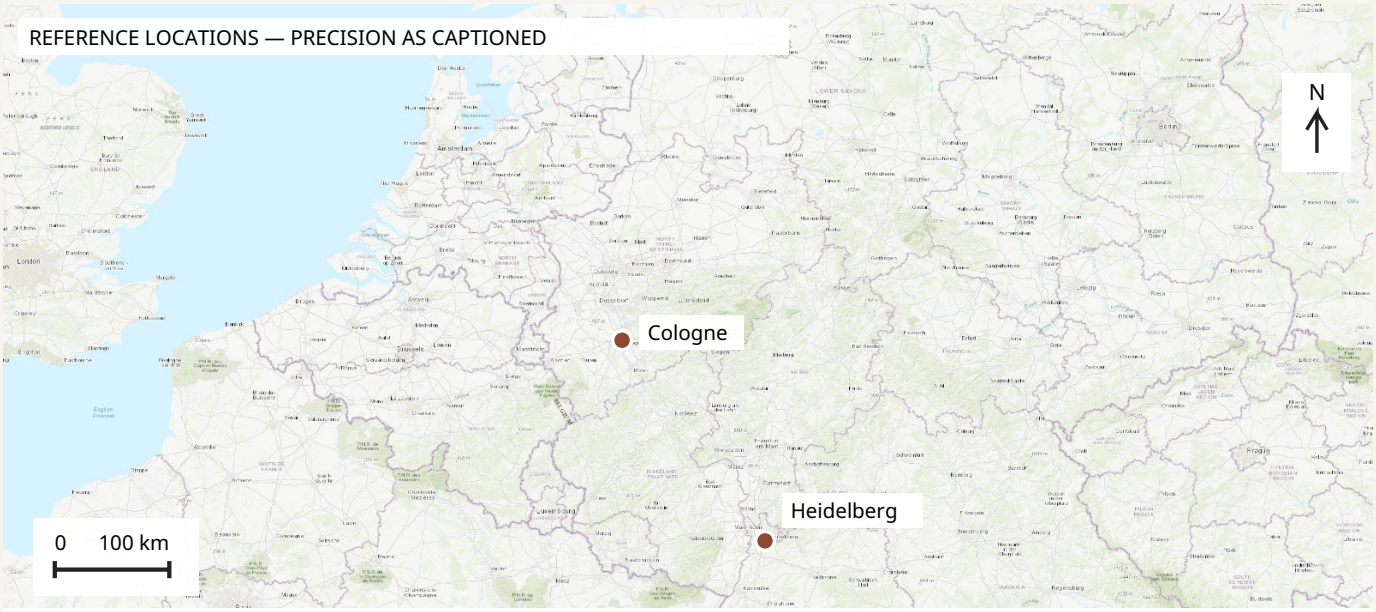
> The arrests are a material security development. Maintain the distinction between the two accused men and the unidentified people whom prosecutors say visited the sites. The public account does not establish Iranian state direction, a recovered device, or an attack carried out.

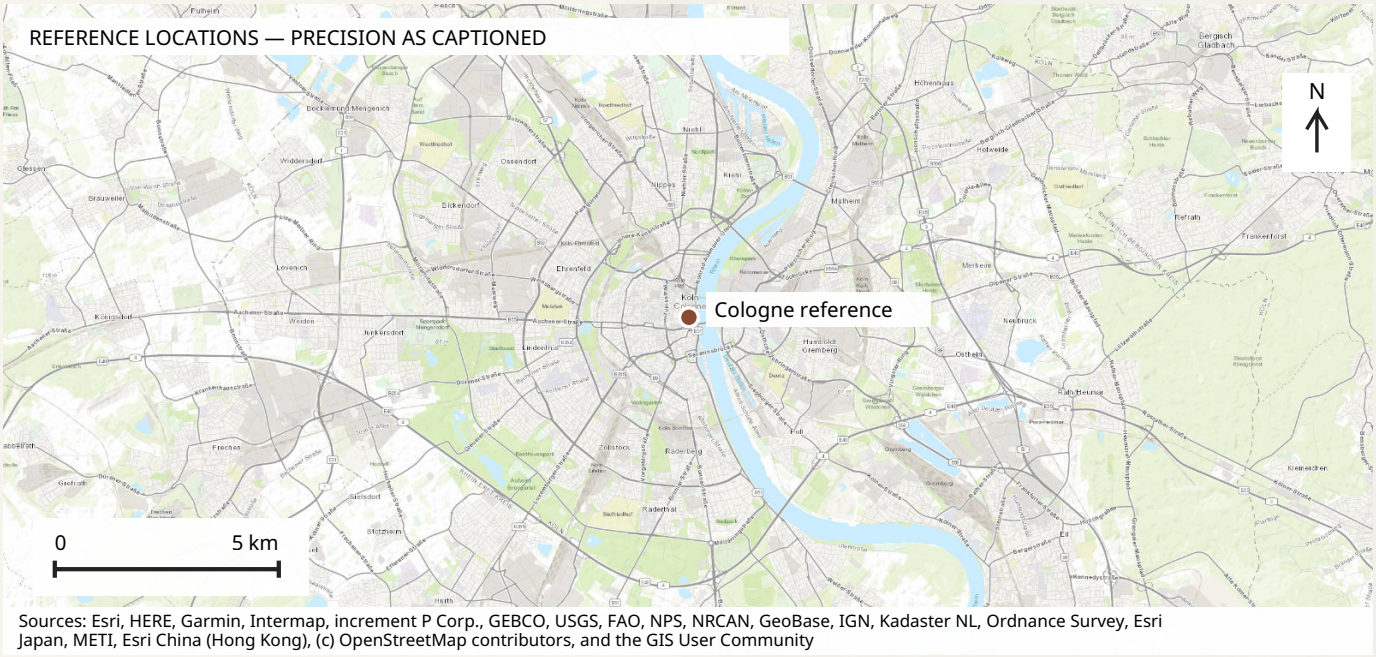
02 / LOCATION ATLAS

Arrest cities and the reported target context

The Federal Public Prosecutor identifies Cologne and Heidelberg as the arrest cities and names a Cologne synagogue plus a second, unnamed European-city synagogue as alleged targets. The markers below are city references only. They do not identify an arrest address, the target building, or a scene coordinate. [1]



Map 1. Regional reference map showing the two reported arrest cities. Markers use approximate city-centre coordinates; they are not evidence of an arrest or target location. Esri World Topographic Map, acquired 27 November 2026. Full layer attribution appears on the map and in source [5]; usage terms in [6].



Map 2. Cologne city reference. The public primary release does not identify the synagogue building or a precise point. The marker must not be read as the location of a reported visit. Esri World Topographic Map, acquired 27 November 2026. [1] [5]

03 / RECONSTRUCTION

A report date, an earlier alleged plan, and a coordinated operation

Late 2025 · Alleged organisation formed

In the arrest-warrant allegations as summarized by prosecutors, Mostafa Al-R., Mohammad Al-Saadi and others formed a separate organisation to prepare further attacks in Germany and Europe. The release says Ameer J. was also a member. This is the prosecution account; no indictment or judicial finding is cited in the public release. [1]

Two consecutive nights in late March 2026 · Alleged target visits

Prosecutors say unidentified people travelled to synagogues in Cologne and another European city, probably with explosive devices. The release says the plan was not ultimately carried out and gives no exact nights, route, device description, or reason for the decision. [1]

18 November · Arrest warrants

The investigating judge at the Federal Court of Justice issued the warrants later executed by federal police. [1]

26 November · Arrests and searches

The Federal Public Prosecutor announced arrests in Heidelberg and Cologne, with searches at 17 properties across Baden-Württemberg, Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia. It said the measures were ongoing at publication. The announcement was published at 10:16 CET; Tagesschau reported at 10:39, and WDR updated its account at 20:17. These are reporting times, not arrest or alleged target-visit times. [1] [2] [3]

Event and reporting dates remain separate: the alleged target activity is placed in March; the new public development is the November arrest and search operation.

04 / ALLEGED STRUCTURE

What prosecutors say the organisation did

Separate entities in the allegation

The GBA describes HAYI, using the name *Harakat Ashab al-Yamin al-Islamiyyah*, as a group that emerged in early 2026. The release says Al-Saadi was a significant figure in HAYI and that it was believed responsible for attacks against US, Israeli and Jewish institutions in Europe. It separately alleges that Al-Saadi, Mostafa Al-R. and others formed a new organisation in late 2025, with Ameer J. as a member, to prepare further attacks. [1]

Those descriptions do not establish that the accused organisation was identical to HAYI, that every reported HAYI attack is attributable to it, or that a state directed either group. The term “pro-Iranian” appears in the prosecutor’s description; the public release does not set out evidence of Iranian government tasking or control. [1] [2]

Alleged preparation and recruitment

Prosecutors say the organisation raised funds and recruited external people for explosive attacks. They do not publish amounts, names, communications, recruitment methods, or the identities of those who allegedly travelled to the sites. The report therefore treats this as a prosecutorial account, not a reconstructed operational chain. [1]

What is not established in the public record

- No completed attack at either synagogue is reported.
- No recovered device, materials, forensic report, or technical identification is described.
- The alleged second city, exact dates, and identities of the people at the sites are not named in the primary release.
- The public record does not establish a link between the alleged organisation and an Iranian state actor.

05 / ENFORCEMENT OPERATION

Arrests, searches, and the legal position at the cutoff

Named accused, limited public identifiers

The GBA identifies the two arrested Iraqi nationals as Mostafa Al-R. and Ameer J. It says both were strongly suspected of membership in a domestic terrorist organisation under section 129a(2)(2) of the German Criminal Code. The press release does not announce a conviction or an indictment. The suspects are presumed innocent. [1]

Seventeen premises and a broad footprint

Searches were reported in Heidelberg and Cologne and in the Rhein-Neckar and Biberach districts, Rüsselsheim, Bergisch Gladbach, Hürth, Kerpen, Remscheid and the Euskirchen district. The Hürth measure concerned an additional accused person; the GBA said several other people affected by searches were not suspects. More than 250 officers from the Federal Criminal Police Office, Federal Police and state forces took part. [1]

This scale establishes a coordinated multi-state enforcement operation. It does not establish the evidential significance of each searched property or the number of people who will face charges.

Judicial step announced, outcome not reported by the cutoff

The morning release said the two men would be brought before the investigating judge at the Federal Court of Justice, who would decide on pre-trial custody. Reuters and the public-broadcast reports reviewed on 26 November repeated that the appearance was expected. No disposition is stated in those reports through the 23:59 GMT cutoff used here. [1] [2] [3] [4]

06 / ATTRIBUTION AND CONSEQUENCES

The accusation, the reporting gap, and community impact

One material difference in the public accounts

The GBA says unidentified people acting for the organisation went to synagogues in two cities. It does not say in its release that either arrested man personally visited a site. Tagesschau and later WDR reporting attribute to investigators a more specific account that the Heidelberg suspect had been near a Cologne synagogue with a suspected explosive device. That additional identification is secondary reporting; it is not stated in the public primary release reviewed here. It should remain a lead for verification, not be merged into the GBA's account as established fact. [1] [2] [3]

Local response

WDR quoted the chair of Cologne's synagogue community describing shock at the report. He said police had told him there was no acute danger to the synagogue and that the community's activities continued without changes at that time. This is a time-bounded account relayed by WDR, not a general or current threat assessment. [3]

ISS Global assessment

The announced arrests may reduce an alleged network's capacity, but the public evidence does not show how much of the alleged structure remains active or whether the individuals who visited the sites have been identified. The relevant security questions are prevention, evidence preservation, site protection and the distinction between a suspect, a group member and an alleged operative.

Attribution should remain at the level supported by the record: prosecutors allege membership in an organisation described as pro-Iranian and report a relationship with a figure linked to HAYI. No public evidence reviewed here establishes Iranian state responsibility. [1]

07 / EVIDENCE AUDIT

What the public record can and cannot support

High confidence · The public operation record

The GBA's dated release directly establishes that the office announced two arrests, 17 searches, the locations listed, the legal suspicion, and the reported participation of more than 250 officers. These are established as official actions and statements. Reuters and ARD/WDR also reported the operation, but their repetition of the GBA account is not independent proof of the underlying allegations. [1] [2] [3] [4]

Moderate confidence · The alleged target context

The primary source attributes the late-March synagogue visits and planned attacks to an organisation, while saying the people who travelled to the sites were unidentified. Same-day Tagesschau and WDR reporting provide a more specific suspect-to-site account. The difference is material and remains unresolved in the public material reviewed by cutoff. [1] [2] [3]

Low confidence or unavailable · Device and external direction

The official notice says "probably with explosive devices," but provides no item, recovery record, construction description, forensic result or classification as an improvised device. The public material also does not establish the second city, the exact dates, the identities of site visitors, why the plan stopped, or state direction. Those gaps prevent a technical reconstruction and constrain attribution. [1]

Imagery and location limits

No verified scene or exhibit image was identified in the primary release or the reviewed same-day reports. WDR published contextual imagery of Cologne religious sites and police activity, but the primary release does not identify the pictured building as the reported target. Those images are excluded. Maps show city references only and do not locate an alleged visit or search address. [1] [3]

08 / INVESTIGATIVE PRIORITIES

Questions for the next evidence-led update

1. **Judicial status:** establish the result of the 26 November judicial appearances from an authoritative court or prosecution record, and distinguish continued detention from a finding of guilt.
2. **Target activity:** clarify whether investigators identify the two accused, other named individuals, or still-unidentified people as the visitors; establish the basis and timestamp for any claimed presence near a synagogue.
3. **Second location:** identify the other European city only from a competent public record. Do not infer it from group claims, media speculation, or later cases.
4. **Physical evidence:** seek any officially disclosed recovery, examination, provenance and chain-of-custody information. Until then, retain "probably carrying explosive devices" as the source's qualified wording and do not infer an IED.
5. **Organisational links:** separate evidence of association, membership, recruitment, financing, operational direction and state sponsorship. Each requires its own source-backed relationship and confidence.
6. **Protective-security consequence:** preserve the community's time-bounded statement and seek later official threat updates before making any current risk assessment.

Dfuze relevance

Represent the operation, warrants, searches, alleged organisation, named accused, alleged visitors, two reported target locations and public statements as distinct records with explicit relations and source provenance. Keep the target-visit claim attributed to the GBA and the more specific suspect-to-site reporting separately attributed to ARD/WDR. Preserve the status of each person as accused or unidentified, and record that no device exhibit is publicly described. This structure supports later reconciliation without collapsing allegations into accepted facts.

> EXECUTIVE JUDGEMENT
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> Future reporting should focus on the judicial outcome, the evidential basis for linking the accused to the Cologne site, and any independently documented device or target activity. Do not broaden the attribution to a state actor without new evidence.

SOURCE REGISTER

Sources 01–06

Source families and access limits are recorded below. Repetition of a statement is not independent proof.

01 GBA: Festnahme von zwei mutmaßlichen Mitgliedern einer pro-iranischen terroristischen Vereinigung

Der Generalbundesanwalt beim Bundesgerichtshof (GBA), via Presseportal · 26 November 2026, 10:16 CET

Family: Primary prosecutorial release; original content by the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office · Full German text read. Primary for the office's own announcement and the allegations as summarized from the arrest warrants; not independent proof of alleged conduct. It says searches were ongoing at publication.

https://www.presseportal.de/blaulicht/pm/14981/6398336

02 Anschlag auf Synagoge geplant? Terrorverdacht – zwei Iraker in Köln und Heidelberg festgenommen

Tagesschau / **ARD, reporting by Holger Schmidt (SWR)** · 26 November 2026, page updated 10:39 CET; item timestamp 10:27 CET

Family: ARD/SWR public-broadcast reporting · Full German report read. Attributes claims to investigators and adds a more specific suspect-to-site account than the GBA release; not an independent forensic record.

https://www.tagesschau.de/eilmeldung/terrorverdacht-festnahmen-102.html

03 Festnahmen: Islamisten sollen Anschlag auf Kölner Synagoge geplant haben

Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) · 26 November 2026, 20:17 CET

Family: ARD/WDR public-broadcast reporting (same family as source 2) · Full German report read. Includes a community-chair interview and time-bounded police reassurance relayed to him; its more specific target narrative remains secondary reporting. Contextual site/security images were reviewed and excluded because the exact target building is not confirmed by the primary release and security positions are not needed to establish the case.

https://www1.wdr.de/nrw/koeln/festnahmen-islamisten-sollen-anschlag-auf-koelner-synagoge-geplant-haben-100.html

04 German police arrest two Iraqis over alleged Cologne synagogue bomb plot

Reuters · 26 November 2026, 10:45 UTC

Family: Reuters wire reporting · Full article read. Independently reported as a news story but relies on the prosecutorial account for the central allegations; confirms reporting and public chronology rather than the underlying plot.

https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/german-police-arrest-two-iraqis-over-alleged-cologne-synagogue-bomb-plot-2026-11-26/

05 World Topographic Map static exports used for the regional and Cologne city-reference maps

Esri and World Topographic Map contributors · Acquired 27 November 2026

Family: Esri basemap service and listed layer contributors · Two 1600 × 760 exports embedded in the report. Returned projection EPSG:3857; input coordinates EPSG:4326. City-centre reference markers are not arrest addresses or target points. Returned extent, request URLs, attribution and scale calculations are retained in the issue record.

https://services.arcgisonline.com/ArcGIS/rest/services/World_Topo_Map/MapServer

06 Data attributions and terms of use

Esri · Current page accessed 27 November 2026

Family: Esri terms and attribution guidance · Official usage and attribution page checked for the embedded basemap exports.

https://www.esri.com/en-us/legal/terms/data-attributions