

German Jews warned of terror threat from Lebanon

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Europe News

Berlin - German security authorities have issued a warning to the Jewish community of an increased threat of terrorist attack emanating from Lebanon, a senior Jewish official said Sunday.

Stefan Kramer, general secretary of the Central Council of German Jews, told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa the warning had been received more than a week ago on January 11.

He confirmed weekend news reports that increased precautions were being taken. The increased threat was to synagogues and Jewish schools across the country, not just in Berlin, as earlier reported, Kramer said.

Kramer referred to information from Lebanon and a possible link to the current trial in Dusseldorf of a Lebanese man, Youssef al-Hajj Dib, 23, on charges of attempting to blow up German trains with suitcase bombs in July 2006.

There were no grounds for panic, Kramer said, adding that German police had increased their protection for Jewish institutions.

The federal German authorities declined to comment on the reports.

On Saturday, the weekly Focus newsmagazine said leaders of the 12,000-strong Jewish community in Berlin had been told of an increased threat.

It added that four Arab men had been arrested while acting suspiciously near Jewish insitutions, although three of them had subsequently been released, while the fourth was being held for unrelated offences.

The magazine reported that a stolen army minibus had been found with its number plates removed, suggesting the vehicle was to have been used in a bomb attack.

It also said that federal German police had found a large quantity of explosives.

There are estimated to be some 200,000 Jews in Germany, half of whom belong to a synagogue or similar institution.

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