

Police raid homes across Germany in hunt for Berlin suspect

David Crossland, Berlin | Rob Hyde, Dortmund

December 22 2016, 5:00pm, The Times



Anis Amri's identification documents were found in the footwell of the lorry more than 24 hours after the attack, having been missed in initial searches

GERMAN FEDERAL CRIMINAL OFFICE/GETTY IMAGES



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Police raided homes across Germany this afternoon in a frantic attempt to find the man suspected of orchestrating the worst Islamist terror attack in the country as it emerged that authorities knew Anis Amri had offered to be a suicide bomber.

Counter terrorism police burst into houses in various districts of Berlin and Dortmund

as well as the refugee hostel in Emmerich, western Germany, where Amri lived for a time after entering Germany in 2015. But authorities said no arrests were made.

Mr Amri, who is on the run, was named yesterday as the chief murder suspect for the killing of 12 people in Berlin when he rammed a lorry into crowds at a Christmas market, injuring 48 on Monday night. Isis have since declared responsibility for the attack.

Earlier, the Breitscheidplatz Christmas market in west Berlin re-opened for the first time since the atrocity. Dozens of police armed with submachine guns patrolled the wooden stalls, and concrete blocks had been placed at the entrance. Candles and flowers were placed on the ground in various places where the 12 had died and where the truck had come to a standstill.



Concrete blocks are put in place this morning at the scene of the attack on the Christmas market
TOBIAS SCHWARZ/GETTY IMAGES

It emerged, however, that German intelligence agencies had known earlier this year that Amri had had jihadist tendencies when they hacked into a conversation between

him and Islamic hate clerics. The security authorities chose not to arrest him at the time, even though he was living in Germany, because they thought that the wording of his offer to be a suicide bomber was too vague. At the same time prosecutors decided to stop their programme of surveillance of him even though he was on a terror watch list.

Der Spiegel, the German news magazine, reported the offers from Amri, who turned 24 today, as Berlin authorities received scathing criticism for failing to monitor and detain the suspected killer.

As global criticism of the intelligence services mounted, Chancellor Merkel tried to shore up public confidence in them, praising their “highly professional work” after a visit to the Berlin base of the Federal Criminal Police.

“Everyone here knows that millions of people are hoping that the attacker can be apprehended soon,” she said. “We have made major efforts in recent years to be better able to tackle the terrorist threat.”

Germany issued a European arrest warrant for Amri, making him the most wanted man in Europe. The security agencies came under further attack after refusing to make public his name and photograph until last night - two days after the killings.

Mrs Merkel’s expression of support for the agencies failed to quell the outrage and disbelief at how Amri was allowed to slip through the net even though he was on a terror watch list and was known to be looking for a gun.

Prosecutors had the Tunisian, who headed to Italy in 2011 at the beginning of the Arab Spring, under surveillance between March and September this year after receiving a tip-off that he was planning a break-in to get money to get weapons for an attack. They stopped watching him after finding nothing incriminating.



Flowers and candles have been placed near the Christmas market in tribute to the 12 people killed and the 50 injured in the attack

MARKUS SCHREIBER/AP PHOTO

“From the information we have been getting since yesterday, it’s just shocking how the authorities have worked here,” said Armin Laschet, an MP in Chancellor Merkel’s CDU party.

Amri served four years in prison in Italy for arson after trying to set fire to a refugee centre on the Italian island of Lampedusa. His asylum request in Germany was rejected but he could not be deported because Tunisia did not issue him with a new passport. It finally arrived yesterday.

The Israeli government last night said that an Israeli woman, Dalia Elyakim, who was visiting Berlin with her husband Rami, was killed in the attack. An Italian woman living in the German capital, Fabrizia Di Lorenzo, 31, is also feared dead. Six of the 12 victims were German.



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Robert Lockhart 3 hours ago

Germany's fear of a big brother state and privacy laws bans CCTV everywhere except transport and railway stations. Reap as you sow Merkel.

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GC 4 hours ago

Brave Polish driver - poor innocent man - RIP Mr Urban .

As for the killer on the loose, it's time isn't it that we no longer accept such killings as the norm. Extreme vetting, border controls & deportations for those with criminal records. Time for all politicians to open their eyes and get real and act fast.

Disgraceful that innocent citizens are killed as if it's alright. It's not.

46 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Denisitme 4 hours ago

All of Europe shd only have accepted "refugees" from Turkish camps. All and every "refugee" arriving on Europe's door shd be turned back from whence they came.....no papers no admission to Europe. Anyone with a history of crime shd be sent straight back, not given asylum pending. Those who gain access to Europe to swear an oath of allegiance to their adopted country and agree to abide by the rule and laws of their adopted country.....no exceptions. Plain speaking, meaning what we say and sticking to it for the protection if the populace is vital. Everyone who has been slaughtered by terrorists in Europe this year has the "open borders" policy aided and abetted by a lunatic chancellor.

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Sid Latimer 4 hours ago

So what are they now doing about the people, that they say that they knew, he was having conversations with ?

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Tom Beck 4 hours ago

'... gross incompetence across German authorities': having lived in Germany for a very long time, I long ago realised that gross incompetence in all such matters is the default position. Which is why the disaster happened in the first place. Merkel was grossly incompetent in letting hundreds of thousands of unregistered people in from some of the most dangerous

places on earth, and then being unable to cope with the result of her gross incompetence. In Berlin the wrong man is arrested, the perpetrator given a day in which to escape. The authorities knew about him, but were too grossly incompetent to stop him, and so it goes on. And the German press is full of articles telling people not to worry or be angry (that would mean the terrorists win), which party not to vote for, and loads of other sh*t designed to ensure Merkel is not blamed for her gross incompetence. It would be funny if it wasn't so depressing!

35 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

[alastair Stevens](#) 4 hours ago

[@Tom Beck](#) Strange, as the image of Germany is the ultimate in competent, well-run nations, compared to the Omnishambles UK. I guess that's looking a bit shattered now....

9 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

[Tom Beck](#) 4 hours ago

Alistair,
Kindly see my reply to Hattie, below or above. Happy Christmas !

★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

[Hattie Powis](#) 4 hours ago

Tom Beck. It's been something of an eye-opener. Though I have been a regular visitor to Germany, I have never lived there. I have blithely assumed that Germany's reputation for efficiency, often the subject of jokes, was still based in fact; after all, towns and villages tend to look very neat and clean - surely the outward expression of a culture defined by competence. I have been rudely disabused of all that.

4 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

[Tom Beck](#) 4 hours ago

Hattie,
In such matters they're fine, it's when it comes to the nitty gritty of anything on a larger and more important scale, then things start to go wrong. The police, for example, have long been a bad joke, fine at picking up people who park wrongly, but in what should be their real work they have never been any good, on the contrary.... it was often said if one wanted to be a criminal, Germany's the place. I could go on, but you get the picture. Cheers, and merry Christmas!

4 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

[Hattie Powis](#) 3 hours ago

Tom Beck. Wow! Clouseau should have been German. Merry Christmas to you too.

4 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Steve Skeptic 4 hours ago

The warnings against allowing over a million people into the EU were closed down and the messengers, as per usual, branded racist and intolerant. I wonder how many more innocents will have to die horrible deaths and pay the price for other people's tolerance. It doesn't work - people don't respect it.

46 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Jon Woolery 5 hours ago

Welcome to the club, Europe: It's the one where you can't deport a convicted foreign criminal having served a prison sentence because the home country under one guise or another won't accept him back. Here in the USA there are hundreds or even thousands of such nationals from at least sixteen countries. Most of those nationals are loose on the streets because our Supreme Court has ruled that the government can hold them a maximum of only six months once their criminal incarceration is completed. That's one problem that President-elect Trump has said he'll turn around, with appropriate but decided pressure on the countries at issue.

25 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Andrew Davies 5 hours ago

A few questions in my mind. A terrorist leaves his full identification papers in the lorry in which he has just committed his act? Seems unlikely but not impossible. Secondly, police think he is injured. So presumably traces of his blood are in the cab? When he was arrested for arson in Italy, did they take his DNA? Also, this evidence as presented in the article might well be accurate, but what it does not say is how many others similarly currently exist on the police radar. Is it a handful? Tens? Hundreds? Thousands? Tens of thousands? Hundreds of thousands? Should they all be locked up for ever before they have done anything but are just on the police radar?

8 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Atchux 4 hours ago

[@Andrew Davies](#) By his fathers account he was in an Italian prison for 4 years.

If they don't have his DNA then I'd be gobsmacked.

7 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Reginald Albion 6 hours ago

Someone should tell Angela Merkel and the German police that while not all Muslims are terrorists, virtually all terrorists these days are Muslims. And they might also consider the fact that terrorists don't generally discuss committing terrorist acts just to make conversation. These two considerations can be determined by using a now outdated and outlawed system of thought known as common sense.

67 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Andrew Davies 5 hours ago

How do you know all this inside information about what 'terrorists' do say and don't say in discussion and what they do and don't mean? This is how witch-hunts occur. Before you know what has happened you are arrested of having been involved with terrorists. I am innocent you plead. Ah they reply, your own evidence convicts you. How else could you speak so authoritatively about a number of terrorist discussions unless you are a terrorist yourself. Read Arthur Millar's *The Crucible*.

1 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

freedomheart 5 hours ago

[@Andrew Davies](#)

'How do you know all this inside information about what 'terrorists' do say and don't say'

I think [@Reginald Albion](#) was referring to the fact that Amri was under surveillance and therefore it was known that he was a potential threat. This was dropped, probably due to glorious Human Rights laws saying that Mr Amri could not be 'harassed' by said surveillance any longer.

This is how horrible massacres are allowed to occur.

23 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Yerwot 5 hours ago

[@Andrew Davies](#) I've read it Andrew and can't find within it any solution to the current problem.

You seem to know better.

So,how would YOU deal with the evil Islamist terrorists?

Do tell.

14 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Steve Skeptic 4 hours ago

@reginald. How dare you be so intolerant as to suggest using common sense? You should be put in prison.

7 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Magenta 7 hours ago

At the End of November the U.K. Authorities denied entry to this country to a PSG player who was due to play Arsenal in a Champions League game on the grounds he had been charged (although not yet been found guilty) of elbowing a police officer. So I am unclear why in the same EU Anis Amir with his criminal record has been allowed to travel from Italy to Germany and then wander around Germany unhindered.

33 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Iain Woods 7 hours ago

@Magenta open borders

24 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Joanne Fisher 6 hours ago

@Magenta Ask Angela.

20 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Neil Munro 6 hours ago

So you are saying that the EU is not draconian enough?

1 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Thinking Allowed 6 hours ago

@Neil Munro Only to its aboriginal citizens

10 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Eden de Vizes 5 hours ago

I hope you did not mean this as offensively as it came across.

★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Robert Highfield 5 hours ago

@Neil Munro Only to Greeks and Italians.

3 ★ Recommend  Reply

Rob Sedgwick 6 hours ago

@Magenta You sir have an island mentality. Once in Europe, you can wander at will from country to country in the main.

1 ★ Recommend  Reply

J Munro 6 hours ago

@Rob Sedgwick @Magenta You can but many EU states have some form of I D card system in place.

3 ★ Recommend  Reply

RTS 5 hours ago

The Schengen system.

5 ★ Recommend  Reply

Mark Woodard 5 hours ago

@Magenta Its called the "Schengen agreement" Once you are into one Schengen state eg Italy , you can travel to any other Schengen state, eg Germany without any further checks.

3 ★ Recommend  Reply

Iain Woods 7 hours ago

The problem society has is that if you dare pass a comment on immigration you are in danger of being labelled a racist, xenophobic, bigot amongst others. When Mr Farage brings this matter to a head he gets all of that and more. I've said this before but you never heard of terrorism a few years ago on the European mainland now it's commonplace. I feel sorry for the liberals on here who can't accept that there is a major problem which is sadly only going to get worse

66 ★ Recommend  Reply

Espen Skogen 6 hours ago

@Iain Woods uhm... https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Army_Faction
It's so easy to forget history....

2 ★ Recommend  Reply

Iain Woods 5 hours ago

@Espen Skogen @Iain Woods years ago I think you'll find

8 ★ Recommend  Reply

Espen Skogen 5 hours ago

@Iain Woods Just a matter of perspective. The Brevik shooting in Norway was in 2011 I think. Jo Cox's murder was this year. But that's not really the point. The point is that terrorists should be identified by the fact that they're terrorists, not whatever false idols they pin their misguided and repulsive belief and motivation to.

2 ★ Recommend  Reply

Neil Munro 6 hours ago

"You never heard of terrorism a few years ago on the European mainland." Are you being serious?

9 ★ Recommend  Reply

Drunken Max 6 hours ago

@Iain Woods Idiotic comment

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism_in_Europe

2 ★ Recommend  Reply

Rob Sedgwick 6 hours ago

@Iain Woods You might not have heard of it, but there was plenty of it! The 1972 Munich massacre for example.

5 ★ Recommend  Reply

J Munro 6 hours ago

@Rob Sedgwick @Iain Woods That was 44 years ago. In addition the RAF was closed down a considerable time ago. The attacks recently have been Islamist overwhelmingly.

11 ★ Recommend  Reply

Espen Skogen 6 hours ago

@J Munro @Rob Sedgwick @Iain Woods Yup, correct, the cause has changed, but a terrorist is still a terrorist.

It's easy to blame the 'islamists', but anyone taking a minute to consider it would realise that if a religion followed by 1.5bn people really was condoning terrorism, we'd all be dead by now.

Arguably, following the same argument, all the socialists of this world ought to have been locked up by now, because clearly the terror of the 70's had a distinct socialist/marxist angle to it, or indeed the conservatives/capitalists - Just look at the terror reign caused by Pablo Escobar in the 70's in Colombia - Admittedly his commodity was strictly illegal, but arguably he was to capitalism what the Baader-Meinhoff gang was to socialism, and what the current flavour of terrorists is to Islam.

Whilst we're at it, the IRA were Catholic - Maybe we should have taken aim at the Pope back in the 80's.

2 ★ Recommend  Reply

Espen Skogen 6 hours ago

@J Munro @Rob Sedgwick @Iain Woods Whilst we're at

it: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Norway_attacks

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Brigades#New_assassinations_by_new_BR_generation

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Brindisi_school_bombing

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassination_of_Sokratis_Giolias

Turns out there's the islamic terrorists, the nazi terrorists, the nihilist terrorists, the nationalist terrorists, and the plan 'nutcase crazy without a cause' terrorists.

1 ★ Recommend  Reply

Robert Highfield 5 hours ago

@Iain Woods Forgotten Bader Meinhoff? Red Army Brigade? PLO? IRA? ETA?

5 ★ Recommend  Reply

Crusader 7 hours ago

Those injured and the families of the murdered should sue the German government for an astronomic amount of money that should be taken from the pensions of the likes of Merkel et al.

There has to be a downside for this level of civil servant incompetence.

12 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Boudicca 7 hours ago

Could the German security services BE any more incompetent?

22 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

freedomheart 5 hours ago

[@Boudicca](#)

Wee..eel, they could issue a photofit for public identification WITH THE SUSPECTS EYES BLACKED OUT so no-one could recognise him because of privacy laws.

No I am NOT making that up. I wish I was.

I don't know about 'incompetent', 'insane' seems a better description.

21 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Lilac 7 hours ago

The sad thing is that we are being killed by utter losers...

36 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Heather 6 hours ago

[@Lilac](#)

Evil pigs.

4 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Jon Woolery 5 hours ago

[@Lilac](#)

Good point, Lilac. It's one thing to be leave this world more or less routinely or even in glory, but the thought of losing one's life to a degenerate conniving creep of a loser renders terrorism that much more atrocious.

7 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Iain Sanders 7 hours ago

If you're in a place where you can't make-it - break it! The revolutionary & terrorist motto throughout history.

Silurian 7 hours ago

If in doubt, throw them out. If it means changing laws to prevent the long-running legal challenges we see today, so be it. Protecting our population trumps being free and easy with people who want to immigrate.

58 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Moonshine 7 hours ago

So often we hear that the young man drawn to extremist mass murder had a history of petty crime.

Why allow a refugee or asylum seeker to stay in your country if he is breaking the law in the very country that offers him sanctuary?

If I wanted to seek the safety of another country there is no way I would start stealing etc from the country I was applying to stay in. And if I did there should be no complaint if I were kicked out.

There should be zero tolerance for illegality for asylum seekers.

79 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Iain Woods 7 hours ago

[@Moonshine](#) totally agree but it's a shame Mr Wilson doesn't have something to say so far as he seems to know everything about what's happening in europe

9 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Dr PWB 7 hours ago

[@Moonshine](#)

Australia won't even give you a holiday visa if you've been jailed for more than a year. For anything, even theft.

12 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

laughalot 4 hours ago

[@Dr PWB](#) [@Moonshine](#)
nor Canada...

2 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Jenesaisquoi 6 hours ago

@Moonshine I think Germany wanted to send him back but Tunisia refused to accept him. Why they wont accept him if a sending Government can find evidence of his family (he has both parents and several siblings) or other evidence that someone was resident in their country of origin I am not sure.

Failing that we have to find a way to make their home countries accept them - or we have to find somewhere else to place these criminals and terrorists - some large purpose built facility based out in the ocean somewhere? An uninhabited island? An off world asteroid?

4 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Lou Valdini 6 hours ago

@Jenesaisquoi @Moonshine A refugee camp in Syria?

1 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

joeblow 6 hours ago

@Jenesaisquoi @Moonshine internment?

★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Neil Munro 6 hours ago

They tried to deport him but Tunisia said "he's not one of ours squire". Who else is going to take him?

2 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Torquemada 5 hours ago

@Neil Munro Should have been dumped on a Tunisian beach.

12 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Hattie Powis 3 hours ago

Neil Munro. But his parents and siblings live there. Germany should have insisted.

3 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

Laconic 6 hours ago

@Moonshine Today you blame the illegal behaviour of asylum seekers. Clearly you have a strong point. But yesterday you vaingloriously and triumphantly blamed Merkel and the Eu movement. Disgraceful conflation which is what Farage/Gove

used to con the electorate. Try your very hardest to tell the truth. Simple as that.

2 ★ Recommend ↩ Reply

laughalot 3 hours ago

@Laconic @Moonshine

Only a moron would say this isn't an EU problem.
Hell free entry, free travel through 27...er 26 countries.
A terrorist dream.

7 ★ Recommend ↩ Reply

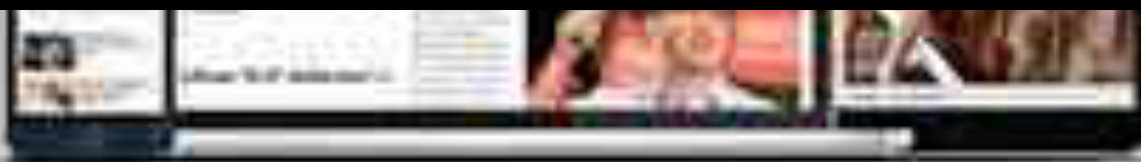
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