



Germany's Protestant and Catholic churches launch campaign against antisemitism

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Germany's main Protestant and Roman Catholic churches have announced plans for a campaign to be launched in January 2021 to encourage Christians to take a clear stand against increasing antisemitism, recognizing it also has Christian roots.

"It must be made clear that antisemitism is a sin and contradicts everything Christianity stands for," Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, the chair of the council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), said in a video message at a press conference in Berlin on 11 November presenting the campaign.

"It is so important, especially now, for us to take a stand against antisemitism which is on the rise again," said Bedford-Strohm.

The motto of the campaign is "Jewish and Christian – closer than you think."

The central element of the campaign will be posters for each month, based on festivals and traditions, that will point to similarities and differences between the two religions, and which can be displayed in churches and church institutions, the EKD stated in a press release about the initiative.

"I think it's a good idea for such a poster series that presents what's Christian and what's Jewish alongside each other," said Rabbi Andreas Nachama, chair of the General Rabbinical Conference of Germany, who has been involved in developing the campaign.

He noted that surveys have put the level of antisemitism in Germany at around 20 to 25 percent.

"Churches are part of this society, so there will be antisemitism there as well, even though in my many encounters with Christians, I have not experienced this," said Nachama.

Felix Klein, the German government's commissioner on antisemitism, said there was still a widespread belief in Germany "that the struggle against antisemitism has nothing to do with the majority of the population."

Originating from an initiative of the Evangelical Church Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Oberlausitz, the campaign has developed into a Germany-wide ecumenical project which has been taken up and supported by the EKD and the German (Roman Catholic) Bishops' Conference.

"It is the duty of us Christians to resolutely oppose all forms of antisemitism," said the Roman Catholic bishop of Erfurt, Ulrich Neymeyr, who chairs the bishops' conference sub-commission for religious relations with Judaism.

"We must not look away when Jews are insulted or attacked," he said. "And we must not ignore it when Jewish jokes are laughed at, when people go on about a supposed Jewish world conspiracy, or when the State of Israel is demonized."

Source: [World Council of Churches](#).