

German police injured in clashes with party-goers flouting COVID-19 restrictions

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Stuttgart, May 30 (RHC)-- An attempt by German police to disperse a crowd of young revelers in Stuttgart late on Saturday ended up in clashes that left five officers injured. Large gatherings are still banned in the city because of COVID-19.

Around 600 young people gathered in downtown Stuttgart late on Saturday, according to German media. A particularly large crowd occupied the Schlossplatz square – a popular spot among the city’s youth. The revelers, who were drinking alcohol and flouting the Covid-19 restrictions on gatherings imposed in the city, soon attracted police attention. However, they did not follow the orders of law enforcement to disperse.

The situation escalated rapidly at around midnight. “Suddenly, bottles were thrown at the emergency services,” a police spokesman said. The revelers were also shouting insults at the officers, and the verbal conflict soon descended into violence. Large police forces were deployed as law enforcement officers decided to disperse the crowd and clear the area.

The night’s events also resulted in some property damage, German media reported, adding that some shop windows were broken by the rioters. Police managed to get the situation under control by 02:00 on Sunday. The interior minister of the German state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Thomas Strobl, denounced the incident as “completely incomprehensible and absolutely unacceptable.”

“It is clear and simple: We do not accept troublemakers in downtown Stuttgart violating the law and massively insulting and even injuring police officers,” the minister said.

Stuttgart authorities and the police are now considering a ban on gathering in several popular areas of the city. The ban would mean that between 22:00 and 06:00 local time, people would only be able to move through the city center, but not gather or stay there, a police spokesman explained.

On Thursday, Stuttgart lifted the night-time curfew that is currently mandatory for any areas in Germany with a high Covid-19 infection rate. Restrictions on gatherings and alcohol consumption are still in place, however.

Stuttgart was not the only German city to see riots over the Covid-19 restrictions. In the Bavarian city of Regensburg, a drunken night-time party involving some 500 people also ended in clashes with police. The scuffles left one police officer injured and one rioter detained, according to local media.

In Hamburg, law enforcement officers broke up a massive illegal rave party in a local park. Around 1,300 people gathered in the area. The partygoers resisted the police action by throwing bottles at the officers.

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