

Germany closes Muslim kindergarten over Islamist links

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Officials in the city of Mainz on Monday withdrew the license of the only Muslim kindergarten in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate amid allegations that the facility was promoting Salafism.



The president of the state's youth office, Detlef Placzek, said the promotion of Salafist materials meant that the nursery no longer adhered to the German constitution.

Officials had a duty to intervene, Placzek said, when an operator was unwilling or unable to "to create the conditions that ensure the well-being of children."

Arab Nil-Rhein chairman Samy El Hagrasy rejected the accusations of extremism and said he would be appealing. "We accept and respect the constitution," said El Hagrasy, adding that the decision was "incomprehensible and a mystery. . . We're being judged based on reports from years ago.

'We don't accept that we and our children should be labelled as Salafists and extremists. We are a parents' initiative with a pedagogic background and reject every form of extremism.'

Alarm bells were first sounded in 2012, when a controversial preacher began attending events for the Arab Nile-Rhein (Arab Nile-Rhine) mosque association, which is responsible for the Al Nur day nursery. Muhammad al-Arifi, a controversial preacher banned from Britain, Denmark and Switzerland, spoke at the Islamic centre.

Further information only came to light in autumn last year, with the revelation that inappropriate literature had been shared at the kindergarten and that the center had worked with an infamous figure within the ultra-conservative Salafist movement. Last October it was claimed the centre was working with traditionalist lecturer Abu Ameenah