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# Religious circumcision of kids a crime - German court

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A German court has ruled that parents can't have their sons circumcised on religious grounds in a move which has angered Muslim and Jewish groups in the country.

The court in Cologne decided that a legal guardian's authority over a child does not allow them to subject them to the procedure, which the court called minor bodily harm, reports The Financial Times Deutschland.

Neither does religious freedom, which is protected by law in Germany, give grounds for such decisions to be

taken for the children, the ruling says.

The court was considering a case against a Muslim doctor, who performed circumcision on a four-year-old boy at his parents' request. Two days after the procedure bleeding started, after which the boy had to be taken to hospital.

German authorities learned about the incident and launched a criminal investigation against the doctor. The initial court trial ruled that there was no violation of the law, but the prosecutor's office took the case to the Cologne district court.

The decision sets a precedent, which may affect medical practice across the country.

The possible ban on circumcision provoked outrage among Jewish and Muslim organizations in Germany, where every year thousands of boys are circumcised in their early years at the request of parents. They regard the ban as a "serious interference in the right to freedom of religion." But none of the organizations so far has commented on the verdict, explaining they first need to study thoroughly the reasoning of the judges.

Some experts however don't rule out that the right for religiously motivated circumcision will be considered by the Federal Constitutional Court.