

German ethics committee tackles circumcision row

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A senior member of Germany's ethics committee Thursday called for a compromise in a heated debate over religious circumcision after a court ruled the practice was tantamount to grievous bodily harm.

"One option would be for non-medical practitioners to be trained by German doctors and subsequently approved by an assembly of rabbis," Peter Dabrock, the deputy chairman of the 26-member committee that advises the government, told NDR radio.

One of Israel's chief rabbis, Yona Metzger, said Tuesday during a visit to Germany that doctors should test the medical competence of people carrying out circumcisions in Germany.

In a ruling published in June, a court in Cologne said removal of the foreskin for religious reasons amounted to grievous bodily harm and was therefore illegal, sparking an outcry at home and abroad.

Diplomats admit that the ruling has proved "disastrous" for Germany's international image, particularly in light of its Nazi past, following uproar from religious and political leaders in Israel as well as [Muslim countries](#).

In July, German MPs adopted a cross-party motion calling on the government to protect religious circumcision.

The resolution urges the government to draw up legislation in the autumn

that "ensures that the circumcision of boys carried out to medically professional standards and without undue pain is fundamentally permissible."

A doctor from the state of Hessen has filed charges with prosecutors in the Bavarian city of Hof against a rabbi for carrying out circumcisions on Jewish boys despite the court ruling.

The public prosecutor said Wednesday the complaint had to be first examined and that no decision had yet been made whether to open preliminary proceedings.

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