

## Germany courtroom-killing trial to hear witnesses to initial slur

Contributed by Egypt News  
Monday, 02 November 2009

Germany's high-profile trial of a man accused of the courtroom killing of a pregnant Egyptian woman heard on Monday from witnesses to the racial attack which triggered the original court case.

Marwa al-Shirbini was stabbed to death in the courtroom at the original trial of the current accused, Alex W, when he was on trial for racially abusing her.

The Dresden court heard testimony from people who had been present when Alex W racially insulted al-Shirbini, who had been wearing a headscarf, at a playground in August 2008.

The 28-year-old German of Russian origin is accused of killing al-Shirbini, 31, during an appeal hearing after he was ordered to pay a 330-euro (480-dollar) fine for his verbal abuse.

The courtroom also decided to hear evidence from al-Shirbini's mother, after she gave a newspaper interview to the Sunday edition of German daily Bild. She had previously declined to testify.

Friends and neighbours of the accused were also to be summoned to the court during the course of the day.

The July 1 killing - which occurred in the same building as the current trial - caused outrage in Egypt.

The accused Alex W has said nothing since the trial began, but at one point banged his head on a table, stamped his feet and yelled.

The 28-year-old unemployed defendant is charged with the racially motivated stabbing of al-Shirbini, as her 3-year-old child looked on, and also with wounding her husband who tried to save her.

A policeman who ran into the room shot her scientist husband in error, thinking he was an assailant. He is due to testify this week.

The court psychologist has already filed a written report saying Russian-born W is sane.

W and al-Shirbini were strangers until she asked him in August 2008 to stop occupying a child's swing at a public playground and let her son use it.

Over four days of hearings, the court has heard that W had never made close friends and had never held down a job. Witnesses described him as socially inept, eccentric and unashamedly hostile to Muslims.

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