

Swiss and Austrian hospitals suspend religious circumcision procedures

Posted: Wed, 25th Jul 2012

Two Swiss hospitals have suspended the performance of infant circumcision, after the [ruling of a German court](#) in Cologne which said that religious circumcision was likely to be illegal because it infringed the rights of the child. The case arose after a four-year old boy suffered excessive bleeding after being circumcised.

Last week, Zurich University Children's Hospital announced that it would stop performing the procedure, and the northern Swiss St. Gall teaching hospital followed suit over the weekend. A Berlin hospital has also stopped permitting circumcisions.

Unlike the German court ruling, which affected all circumcisions in the country, it is expected that the Swiss move will not affect circumcisions that take place in mosques and synagogues.

Meanwhile in Austria, the governor of the nation's most western province of Vorarlberg, Markus Wallner, has told state-run hospitals run to suspend religious circumcisions, again citing the German ruling that the practice amounted to causing criminal bodily harm.

Mr Wallner says he sees the German decision last month, arising from the case of a child whose circumcision led to medical complications, as a "precedence-setting judgment." He told provincial hospitals on Tuesday not to perform the procedure except for health reasons until the legal situation is clarified in Austria.

The decision does not affect religiously motivated circumcisions performed outside hospitals run by the Vorarlberg government.

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