



New law passed in Germany to give descendants of Nazi-era refugees easier access to citizenship

Description

GERMANY: The German parliament has passed new legislation to ease the path to citizenship for descendants of people who fled Nazi Germany, closing certain loopholes on the issue from previous laws.

On Friday, Germany's parliament approved legal changes to close prohibitive loopholes, making it easier for descendants of Nazi-era refugees to apply or reapply for German citizenship.

Former German citizens who were deprived of their citizenship on political, racial or religious grounds between 1933 and 1945 and their descendants can restore their citizenship under Germany's Basic Law.

However, the previous law prohibited some descendants of refugees applying on the grounds that they were born to a German mother and non-German father. Citizenship could be only passed through the paternal line in Germany prior to 1953.

Under the new law, the loopholes are closed, allowing those with non-German paternal lines to also claim citizenship.

"The ruling coalition has taken important legal steps to ensure that Germany lives up to its historical responsibility," President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany Josef Schuster said in response to the parliamentary action.

Schuster said the new law sent an important message at a time when anti-Semitism and right-wing ideologies are on the rise. *"Political education and enlightenment in general must be strengthened in order to push back anti-democratic tendencies,"* he added.

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