



Residents dropping a baby to emergency-service personnel during a fire in an apartment building Sunday in Ludwigshafen, Germany. (Agence France-Presse)

## Threatened by fire in Germany, parents threw baby 4 flights to safety

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**LUDWIGSHAFEN, Germany:** Trapped by smoke, the parents of a nine-month-old baby girl faced an excruciating dilemma: if they threw her out of the window, would she be caught four stories below?

The split-second decision paid off: Onur fell safely into the arms of a policeman below. The parents also survived, although the mother was still in a hospital Tuesday, two days after the blaze that killed nine people, including five children.

The drama at a building in southwestern Germany was captured in a series of photographs of the baby in freefall as a group of anguished adults, thick smoke billowing around them, looked on.

The building was home to Turkish immigrants, and Turkey's prime minister expressed concern Tuesday about possible arson. A small girl told Germany's RTL television that she saw a man setting fire to something in the building.

"We want the incident to be enlightened as soon as possible," Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said, adding he hoped "there was nothing based on hostility toward foreigners."

Erdogan said a government official and four Turkish police officers would visit the scene of the fire.

With the staircase destroyed by flames, adults also jumped for their lives while others formed human ladders to help save people trapped inside, police and rescue workers said. Children from lower floors were handed to rescue workers atop an ambulance. Some who jumped missed rescue nets laid out by police.

"The scenes were so terrible that some of the forces deployed wanted to give up their jobs afterward," police chief Wolfgang Fromm said.

The fire broke out during carnival celebrations in the city.

Rescue officers and investigators were still unable to enter the four-story building Tuesday because of the danger it might collapse. Police spokesman Michael Lindner said he could not rule out further victims, "but we hope we will not find any more people dead."

Police say that two Turkish families lived in the building, and that 24 people in total were registered as living there. It was unclear exactly how many people were in the house at the time.

Police spokeswoman Simone Eisenbarth did not release the name of the policeman who caught the child, but said he was injured after he fell to the ground and struck his head. He was treated at a hospital and released.

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