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Brief summary 2021 Report on the Protection of the Constitution

Facts and Trends



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Table of contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Politically motivated crime | 7 |
| Right-wing extremism/terrorism | 11 |
| “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” | 19 |
| “Efforts to delegitimise the state falling within the remit of the German domestic intelligence community” | 23 |
| Left-wing extremism | 27 |
| Islamist extremism/terrorism | 34 |
| Foreign extremism | 40 |
| Intelligence activities, espionage, cyber attacks and other activities which threaten security, carried out on behalf of a foreign power | 44 |
| Security of classified material, personnel security and counter-sabotage | 51 |
| The Scientology Organisation (SO) | 53 |

2021 REPORT ON THE PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION
FACTS AND TRENDS

Politically motivated crime¹

In 2021, the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) registered a total of 55,048 politically motivated crimes (2020: 44,692). Of these, 13,832 (or 25.1%) were propaganda offences (2020: 15,275, or 34.2%) and 3,889 (7.1%) were politically motivated violent crimes (2020: 3,365, or 7.5%).

Of the total number of politically motivated crimes, 33,476 (60.8%) were found to have an extremist background (2020: 32,924, or 73.7%). Of these, 5,948 (2020: 2,865) offences could not be assigned to any particular category.

Key points:

- The number of crimes with a right-wing extremist background rose by 9.6% in the reporting period; the number of violent crimes in this subset fell by 7.6%. These violent crimes included three homicide cases (one successful and two attempted).
- The number of crimes with a left-wing extremist background fell by 7.4%; the number of violent crimes in this subset fell by 20.2% and included one attempted homicide. Most of these violent crimes were still targeted at the police/security authorities. And, once again, many such crimes were directed against the state, its institutions and symbols. Compared with the previous year, there was a rise in violent crimes in connection with “campaigns against restructuring”, or urban renewal (2021: 290, 2020: 271).
- After a considerable decrease in the previous year due to restrictions connected with the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of crimes, including violent crimes, motivated by extremist foreign ideology increased once again in the reporting period. There was a 46.8% increase in violent offences (2021: 116, 2020: 79), of which four were

1 Figures based on data supplied by the Federal Criminal Police Office.

attempted homicides (2020: 1). This can be explained, in particular, by the resumption of public events and protests.

Details:

The number of offences categorised as **right-wing politically motivated crime** was 21,964 (2020: 23,604). Of these, 12,255 (2020: 13,659) were propaganda offences under sections 86 and 86a of the German Criminal Code (Strafgesetzbuch, StGB) and 1,042 (2020: 1,092) were violent crimes. As a subset of this category, 20,201 crimes with a right-wing extremist background were recorded (2020: 22,357), among them 945 violent crimes (2020: 1,023). This represents an approximate 7.6% decrease in the number of violent crimes compared with the previous year. These crimes include two attempted homicides and one successful homicide, in which the perpetrator killed his wife, their three children and himself. The man had written a suicide note expressing antisemitic conspiracy ideologies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, the number of right-wing violent crimes motivated by xenophobia fell by 8.0% (686 offences; 2020: 746). The number of right-wing extremist crimes motivated by antisemitism rose by 12.2% to 2,439 (2020: 2,173), while the number of violent crimes in this subset dropped by 27.1% to 35 (2020: 48).

In the reporting year, 1,330 politically motivated offences were attributed to “**Reichsbürger**” and “**Selbstverwalter**” (2020: 772), of which 1,011 were categorised as extremist (2020: 599). Of these, 184 were violent crimes (2020: 125), chiefly extortion (116) or resistance to law enforcement officers (44). Coercion and threats also accounted for a considerable number of offences (341). Of the crimes attributed to “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter”, 48 were found to be motivated by antisemitism.

The number of offences categorised as **left-wing politically motivated crime** was 10,113 (2020: 10,971), including 1,203 violent crimes (21.2% lower than in 2020: 1,526). As a subset of this category, 6,142 crimes with a left-wing extremist background were recorded (2020: 6,632), including 987 (2020: 1,237) violent

crimes. The number of crimes with a left-wing extremist background fell by 7.4%; the number of violent crimes in this subset fell by 20.2%

Of the violent left-wing extremist offences, 572 were categorised as violent crimes against the police/security authorities (2020: 776), a decrease of over a quarter. The number of violent offences directed at actual or supposed right-wing extremists fell to a total of 264 (2020: 340, a decrease of 22.4%), and the number of violent crimes against the state, its institutions and symbols dropped this year to 471, a decrease of 30.8% (2020: 681). On the other hand, the number of violent crimes related to “campaigns against restructuring”, or urban renewal, rose by 6.6% compared with the previous year (2021: 290, 2020: 272). Over 90% of violent crimes in this category (262) were committed in Berlin.

In 2021, 409 extremist offences were recorded in the category of **politically motivated crime – religious ideology** (2020: 409). Most of these offences (372; 2020: 378) had an Islamist background. Of the 409 offences motivated by extremist religious ideology, 49 were violent offences (2020: 33, an increase of 48.5%), including two attempted homicides, 39 cases of bodily injury and one arson attack. Another 49 offences were recorded as preparation or support for a serious act of violence endangering state security (sections 89a to 89c and section 91 of the Criminal Code), down from 56 in 2020, and 43 were counted as membership in or support for a foreign terrorist organisation (section 129b of the Criminal Code), compared to 34 in 2020.

The number of offences categorised as **politically motivated crime – foreign ideology** was 1,153 (2020: 1,016), including 140 violent crimes (2020: 113). Of this number, 776 had an extremist background, representing a 17.4% increase (2020: 661). These offences were predominantly breaches of the Act Governing Private Associations (Vereinsgesetz, VereinsG) (21.1%) and criminal damage (14.7%), but also included 116 violent crimes (14.9%), a sharp increase of 46.8% compared to 2020 (79 violent crimes). Most of these were bodily injury offences (49.1%), although four attempted homicides were also counted during the reporting year. The increase in the number of crimes, including violent crimes, motivated by extremist foreign ideology can largely be attributed to a

rise in the number of public events being held, since most large-scale events, demonstrations and other activities involving large numbers of people had been cancelled the previous year due to the pandemic.

Right-wing extremism/terrorism

By the end of 2021, the number of right-wing extremist sympathisers after subtracting multiple memberships was 33,900 (2020: 33,300). The number of right-wing extremists classed as violence-oriented rose to 13,500 (2020: 13,300).

| Right-wing extremist following ¹ | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| | 2020 | 2021 |
| Political party membership | 13,250 | 11,800 |
| Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD/National-Democratic Party of Germany) | 3,500 | 3,150 |
| DIE RECHTE (The Right) | 550 | 500 |
| Der III. Weg (The Third Way) | 600 | 650 |
| Membership of other right-wing extremist parties ² | 8,600 | 7,500 |
| Membership of groups/organisations not affiliated with or independent of political parties ³ | 7,800 | 8,500 |
| No membership of any right-wing extremist grouping/organisation ⁴ | 13,700 | 15,000 |
| Total | 34,750 | 35,300 |
| After subtracting multiple memberships | 33,300 | 33,900 |
| of which violence-oriented right-wing extremists | 13,300 | 13,500 |
| <p>1 Some of these figures are estimated and rounded off.</p> <p>2 This number includes members of the youth organisation Junge Alternative (JA, Young Alternative; classed as a suspected threat (Verdachtsfall) and the grouping Der Flügel (The Wing; suspected threat), which has been formally dissolved.</p> <p>3 In the reporting period, this number includes those out of a total of 1,150 right-wing extremist "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" who are organised in cross-regional groups, as well as the following intelligence targets: Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (IDB, Identitarian Movement Germany), COMPACT-Magazin GmbH (COMPACT Magazine), PI NEWS, Institut für Staatspolitik (IfS, Institute for State Policy; suspected threat), Verlag Antaios (Antaios publishing house; suspected threat) and Ein Prozent e.V. (One Per Cent; suspected threat)</p> <p>4 In the reporting period, this number includes those out of a total of 1,150 right-wing extremist "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" who do not belong to any organised group.</p> | | |

The total number of right-wing extremist **criminal and violent offences** fell by about 9.6% in comparison to the previous year (2020: 22,357; 2021: 20,201). Propaganda offences made up the largest share of right-wing extremist crime

at 58.7% (11,866), In comparison to the previous year, right-wing extremist violent offences fell by 7.6% (2020: 1,023; 2021: 945). At 82.9%, bodily injury offences (783) made up the largest share of violent offences and remained at about the same level as the previous year (2020: 82.3%, 842) The number of arson offences fell significantly compared to the previous year. Right-wing extremist bodily injury offences with a xenophobic background decreased by 6.4% (2020: 690; 2021: 646). The total number of violent offences with a xenophobic background fell as well (2020: 746; 2021: 686, -8.0%). The number of right-wing extremist offences in the category of coercion/threats decreased by 11% (2020: 478; 2021: 425), while those in the category of property damage went up by 4.0% (2020: 880; 2021: 923).

In 2021, two attempted homicides and one **homicide** were recorded, resulting in four deaths (2020: two attempted homicides, one homicide). The homicide was a case in which a man shot and killed his wife, their three children and himself in their home using a firearm he had acquired illegally. The man had written a suicide note expressing antisemitic conspiracy theories in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Right-wing extremists continue to pursue the goal of gaining acceptance among mainstream democratic groups. To do so, they take advantage of **protests against government action to prevent the spread of COVID-19**. Observed over the entire reporting period, their attempts met with little success. Starting in late autumn 2021, the debate over introducing mandatory vaccinations was accompanied by a renewed increase in the number of demonstrations nationwide against the government measures to contain the pandemic. The protests also took on a new form of local rallies in smaller cities. In Saxony, the protest movement was especially active and was largely driven by a new regional, right-wing extremist party founded in February 2021, Freie Sachsen (Free Saxony).

Right-wing extremist parties as well as groups associated with the New Right sought to exploit the **flooding disaster** in North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate in July 2021 for their own ends by offering aid to victims.

Some aid campaigns received a great deal of media coverage but found little acceptance among the public.

In spring, there was a series of attacks, in some cases serious, on individual right-wing extremists, as well as property damage and arson attacks on right-wing extremist premises in several eastern federal states. For example, on 11 March 2021 the head of the NPD youth organisation Junge Nationalisten (JN, Young Nationalists) was attacked in his home in Saxony by several persons disguised as police officers; he suffered serious injuries. A similar attack on a neo-Nazi and his domestic partner took place in Thuringia on 28 May 2021. Within the right-wing extremist scene, the attacks led to an ongoing discussion of self-defence and vigilante justice to counter the attacks, which were described as “left-wing extremist terrorism” within the scene. In addition to declarations of solidarity for the attack victims, which extended across the various organisations, parties and spectrums within the right-wing extremist scene, subtle threats were directed at their political opponents and efforts were made to identify the attackers. Attempts to establish networks within the right-wing extremist scene across party and organisation boundaries were also apparent. One example was a meeting between neo-Nazis and members of the NPD in Eisenach, Thuringia, in May 2021.

As in the previous year, the COVID-19 pandemic had considerable impacts on every kind of right-wing extremist event, from demonstrations to combat sport events and concerts of right-wing extremist music.

With regard to the mobilisation of supporters, again in 2021 right-wing extremist **demonstrations** were significantly impacted by the pandemic and the government measures to contain it, which resulted in a major reduction in the number of demonstrations to 88, from 233 in 2020.

Combat sports continue to serve as a means to bring together different groups within the right-wing extremist scene. Despite restrictions resulting from the pandemic, combat sport training continued on right-wing extremist premises or outdoors, though no large-scale competitions were held. Cross-border

cooperation among security authorities was able to prevent right-wing extremists from holding a combat sport event in a neighbouring country to take the place of the Kampf der Nibelungen (KdN, Battle of the Nibelungs).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, again in 2021 the number of right-wing extremist **concerts** and the size of their audiences remained much smaller than before the pandemic. Despite difficult conditions in 2020 and 2021, the right-wing extremist music scene in Germany remains very agile and ready to act. That was demonstrated by the jump in the number of concerts starting in mid-2021 after some COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. And as in the previous year, during the reporting year an above-average number (compared to before the pandemic) of new right-wing extremist music recordings were published.

The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced **antisemitism** and antisemitic narratives and was a key factor in disseminating openly or coded antisemitic conspiracy theories. Examples include narratives positing that a secret elite, usually made up of groups identified as Jewish, such as the Rothschild and Rockefeller families, or described as figures from the world of “high finance”, is taking advantage of the pandemic and vaccinations to enslave humanity. A conspiracy theory known as the “Great Reset”² referring to COVID-19 and containing antisemitic elements has become established and is present in various strands of right-wing extremism. Antisemitic conspiracy theories are disseminated throughout the right-wing extremist scene and beyond, especially via social media.

Right-wing extremist political parties are currently not a factor in elections. Their role is limited to structuring and mobilising the right-wing extremist spectrum. Whereas the membership and organisational structures of the NPD and DIE RECHTE appear to be eroding, Der III. Weg continued to expand its organisation above all in the eastern federal states.

Again in 2021, the **NPD** remained relevant for the internal organisation of the right-wing extremist scene. But the NPD has been having difficulties for

2 The “Great Reset” narrative asserts that a “global elite” in politics and the economy is striving to establish a globalised dictatorship. The term “Great Reset” originated with an initiative of the World Economic Forum focused on economic reforms to increase sustainability and participation in society.

some time, and these worsened further in 2021. The party is struggling as its membership continues to shrink, falling to 3,150 in 2021 (2020: 3,500). Again in 2021, the NPD lost favour with voters: its results in the Bundestag and state parliamentary elections in the reporting year were uniformly poor. As a result, the party lost its claim to government funding for political parties. It also had to pay back funds it had already received for 2021. This further restricts the NPD's ability to act. The party is still facing complete exclusion from government funding after three constitutional bodies, the Bundesrat, Bundestag and Federal Government, petitioned the Federal Constitutional Court to that effect; the proceedings are still pending at that court. On top of everything else, the ongoing internal conflict over the NPD's strategic orientation has weakened the party further.

The party **DIE RECHTE** says that it has set up nine associations at state level. But its organisational structure in the individual federal states frequently changes. Some associations at local or state level exist only for a few months, are inactive or are re-established without having been formally dissolved. And some associations exist for years only on paper without ever being active. Only the associations for North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony and south-west Germany, which encompasses the federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland, engage in relevant activities. The party is still most active in North Rhine-Westphalia. On 22 August 2021, DIE RECHTE held their 11th national party conference, electing party founder and former treasurer Christian Worch as national party chair, after the two co-chairs from North Rhine-Westphalia decided not to run for re-election. Party membership sank to 500 in the reporting year (2020: 550).

A number of high-ranking party functionaries left the North Rhine-Westphalia party association: two leading activists from Dortmund moved to Saxony in 2021 and withdrew from all party activity. No one has been found to fill the vacant positions within the party apparatus. The difficulties in the most important state association also have an impact on the party as a whole. Only a few larger events were held during the reporting year. The largest demonstration was

held on 9 October 2021 in Dortmund, North Rhine-Westphalia: a march with about 500 participants in memory of a prominent party activist who had died.

In 2021, the party **Der III. Weg** continued steadily expanding its organisation, above all in the eastern federal states. The party has about 20 regional “strongholds” linked to the regional associations in the federal states of Bavaria and Saxony and to the regional associations for western (Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate) and central (Berlin, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia) Germany. The party founded two new “strongholds” in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt during the reporting year. Its membership increased slightly in 2021 as a result of its structural consolidation and expansion (2021: 650; 2020: 600). At its national party conference on 13 November 2021, deputy party chair Matthias Fischer succeeded Klaus Armstroff as chair. Armstroff remained in the party executive as deputy.

Der III. Weg seeks a leadership role in the neo-Nazi spectrum. It uses high-profile campaigns and social activities to portray itself as a “party that cares about you” and hopes to gain acceptance and members from mainstream society.

In the reporting year, the party campaigned in Bundestag elections for the first time since it was founded. This was necessary to meet the legal requirements of the Political Parties Act (*Parteiengesetz*) and to secure its status as a political party. It entered the elections with lists of party candidates in the federal states of Bavaria and Saxony and with a direct candidate in the district of Vogtland in Saxony. Although the party got more votes in both federal states than it did in the European parliamentary elections in 2019, its national results were 0.0%, leaving it meaningless. In its election campaign, Der III. Weg intentionally courted controversy. Its poster campaign “Hang the Greens!” in Saxony and Bavaria gained national media attention. In mid-September 2021, the party organised a rally in Würzburg, Bavaria, near the site where an asylum applicant from Somalia had killed three people and injured nine more on 25 June 2021. At the party rally, three straw figures splattered with fake blood were on display to symbolise the attack victims. Immediately next to the figures, the rally organisers placed portraits of the chancellor candidates from the

Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (CDU, Christian Democratic Union), Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD, Social Democratic Party) and BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN (ALLIANCE 90/THE GREENS) with the words “It’s so nicely coloured here”. In this way, Der III. Weg sought to imply that the three established political parties and their refugee policies were directly responsible for the attack.

The **Junge Alternative für Deutschland** (JA, Young Alternative for Germany) has been under surveillance by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution since January 2019 as a suspected extremist threat. The JA was founded in 2013 and is the official youth organisation of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD, Alternative for Germany). After the Lower Saxony state association was founded in April 2021, the JA now comprises 16 state associations and claims to have 1,600 members.

Anti-Muslim views are widespread within the JA. For example, on 27 July 2021 one of the deputy national chairs claimed on Twitter that Islam was “culturally incompatible” with German society, and that the indigenous population “must remain in control with at least a minimum level of [racial] homogeneity”. Within the JA, phrases such as “COVID totalitarianism” and “vaccination totalitarianism” are frequently used with reference to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the government measures to contain it, showing contempt for the principle of democracy and the rule of law.

The outcome of the JA national convention in Volkmarsen, Hesse, in April 2021 indicates the growing influence of “patriotic solidarity” within the organisation.³ One of the two national co-chairs elected at the convention was already notorious for his strongly held racist (*völkisch*) and nationalist views. Two weeks after the election, the AfD working group aimed at giving the domestic intelligence agencies no reason to observe the party called for the newly elected national executive to step down. The working group called in particular for the co-chair’s resignation due to racist Twitter messages which,

3 “Patriotic solidarity” (solidarischer Patriotismus) refers to a nationalistic approach to social policy. The “patriotic solidarity” camp within the JA has a racist and nationalist orientation and overlaps in many areas with right-wing extremism.

according to the working group, opposed the free and democratic constitutional system in various ways. On 3 May 2021, the co-chair announced that he was leaving the AfD, and he also resigned as national co-chair of the JA. Even after his resignation, however, the JA national executive remains dominated by the “patriotic solidarity” camp.

There are many facts to indicate that followers of Der Flügel remained active in 2021, even though the group was formally dissolved on 30 April 2020 under surveillance by the domestic intelligence agencies as a suspected extremist threat.

The name **Neue Rechte** (New Right) refers to an informal network of groups, individuals and organisations, from right-wing conservative to right-wing extremist, which work together to promote their sometimes anti-liberal and anti-democratic positions in society and the political sphere. The Neue Rechte includes among others the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, the Institut für Staatspolitik (suspected threat), COMPACT-Magazin GmbH (suspected threat), Verlag Antaios (suspected threat) and Ein Prozent e.V. (suspected threat).

“Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter”

“Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” (literally, “citizens of the Reich” and “self-administrators”) comprise groups and individuals who, for various reasons, deny the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany and reject its legal system. The scene includes a broad range of individuals and organisations with very different ideologies. Apart from those individuals who are not affiliated with any organisation, “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” are active in small to very small groupings, groups active across regional borders, and virtual networks.

It is difficult to draw a clear distinction between “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter”. “**Reichsbürger**” invoke the continued existence of some kind of “German Reich” and reject the Federal Republic of Germany. By contrast, “**Selbstverwalter**” feel that they are not part of any state at all. They claim they can secede from the state by making a declaration to that effect and are therefore not bound by its laws. They often cite a UN resolution which they believe allows them to withdraw from the Federal Republic of Germany and administer their affairs independently. Some mark the borders of their residential property to indicate the extent of their supposedly sovereign area of administration. In some cases, they may defend this area using force, especially when claiming a right of self-defence.

As a whole, the “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” scene should be considered hostile to the Federal Republic of Germany and its constitutional system. “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” have some views in common with right-wing extremist ideology when it comes to territorial and historical revisionism, nationalist and, to some extent, National Socialist thought. Some “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” also express antisemitic views, but the heterogeneity of the scene makes it difficult to generalise.

In 2021, the number of **sympathisers** rose again compared to the previous year. This increase largely had to do with the protests against **government measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic**, which led to increased activity

among some segments of the “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” scene. In 2021, the scene was thought to comprise about 21,000 persons nationwide (2020: 20,000). More than 5% of them can be considered right-wing extremists (2021: 1,150; 2020: 1,000). About 2,100 “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” are thought to be **violence-oriented** (2020: 2,000). This number includes violent members of the scene as well as people who have come to the attention of the authorities by making threats or statements endorsing violence and having the relevant ideological content.

Again in 2021, “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” continued to use the pandemic as a pretext for **spreading propaganda and disinformation** online. Without drawing attention to themselves, they also took part in demonstrations against government measures to contain the pandemic. They were especially opposed to COVID-19 prevention measures at schools, which they claimed constituted physical or mental “abuse” of children. With their protests “for the good of the child”, they were sometimes able to mobilise support from outside the “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” scene as well.

They continue to use the **internet**, in particular **social media**, intensively in connection with the pandemic as well as other issues. For example, the Vaterländischer Hilfsdienst (VHD, fatherland aid services), a subdivision of the “Reichsbürger” grouping known as Bismarcks Erben (Bismarck’s heirs) has attempted to establish its own news service called *VHD Aktuell*.

The scene continues to use the tactic of sending government agencies and offices **large numbers of long letters** containing obscure or muddled arguments or claims and questionable interpretations of the law. Statements range from simple rejection of official activity all the way to extortion, insult and coercion, sometimes accompanied by threats of violence.

Activities which earn some “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” considerable revenue from others in the scene are especially important. For example, the “Selbstverwalter” grouping **Königreich Deutschland** (KRD, Kingdom of Germany) gives its followers the impression that they could avoid having to

pay taxes if they pay to join the KRD. The KRD “savings bank”, called the **Ge-meinwohlfasse**, takes in substantial amounts of money, promising account holders that they will earn good returns and their savings will fund KRD projects to benefit the common good. However, account holders are given no guarantee that they will get their money back.

The organisation **Geeinte deutsche Völker und Stämme (GdVuSt**, united German peoples and tribes) remained active despite a ban issued in March 2020. Its leader⁴ continued to offer seminars for a fee. And numerous letters to government agencies and ministries surfaced in which the leader proclaimed the “designation of naturally governed landscapes” on behalf of the GdVuSt.⁵ The GdVuSt mainly uses the online messaging service Telegram to disseminate its ideology and reach a larger audience. Some of its posts are blatantly antisemitic, which was the reason for banning the group.

The ideology of “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” is incompatible with the obligations of public employees as set out in labour and **civil service law** to uphold the liberal democratic order. During the reporting year, various action was taken under labour and civil service law against federal civil servants with ties to the “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” scene.

“Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” have a **considerable potential for violence**, which is often displayed in their resistance to government action. For example, a “Reichsbürger” used a crossbow to shoot at police during a search on 9 September 2021. Further, “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” often **promote the use of violence and weapons**, sometimes even arguing that their ostensible duty to resist justifies the killing of elected officials.

“Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” who believe the **S.H.A.E.F. conspiracy theory** typically call for the use of violence against political figures and representatives of the media. This narrative is typical within the “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” scene and was further disseminated during the reporting

4 She was arrested on 4 May 2022.

5 This statement is meant to claim that the law of the Federal Republic of Germany does not apply in a certain area.

year. It refers to laws of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (S.H.A.E.F.)⁶ and claims that Germany is still an occupied country under military administration. For that reason, according to the narrative, neither the current legal system nor the government or public administration of the Federal Republic of Germany needs to be recognised.

“Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” continue to represent a threat due to their **affinity for weapons**. By the end of 2021, at least 1,050 weapons permits held by “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” had been revoked. About 500 individuals still have at least one weapons permit.

6 During the Second World War, S.H.A.E.F. held the supreme command of the Allied forces in Europe and was dissolved after the war.

“Efforts to delegitimise the state falling within the remit of the German domestic intelligence community”

The beginning of the coronavirus pandemic and the accompanying governmental containment measures brought about social discussions and legitimate protest actions against these measures in Germany. In some cases, however, public statements or actions staged by groups or individuals exceeded such legitimate protests and gave actual reason to presume anti-constitutional efforts. It is often impossible to classify the responsible groups or individuals as belonging to one of the fields of work of the domestic intelligence services. Therefore, in April 2021 BfV established the “efforts to delegitimise the state falling within the remit of the German domestic intelligence community” as a **new field of work**.

The pertinent protagonists often aim to invalidate constitutional key principles or to considerably impair the functionality of the state or of its institutions. They disparage democratic decision-making processes as well as legislative, executive and judicial institutions by publicly denying them legitimacy, and they call for noncompliance with official or judicial directives and decrees. This can shake the confidence in the whole state system and impair its functionality. Such agitation contradicts fundamental constitutional principles like the principle of democracy or the rule of law. The individuals belonging to this field of work aim to radicalise and mobilise parts of the population in order to promote their own agenda.

Efforts of this kind are monitored by the domestic intelligence services, irrespectively of whether the underlying ideology can be clearly classified as belonging to an already known form of extremism. Several links and ideological overlaps with other fields of work exist. Members of the right-wing extremist scene as well as “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” have repeatedly attempted to monopolise the protest spectrum. Though this was only partly successful, the continued pandemic situation and resulting modifications of governmental countermeasures have led to increasingly worrying tendencies among the protesters. Conspiracy myths, frequently intermingled with elements

of antisemitic resentments, are spread in wide parts of the protest scene as a matter of course these days. The legitimacy of the state and its institutions is fundamentally challenged. Measures to contain the coronavirus pandemic are called dictatorial. This narrative forms the basis for propagating resistance against government measures and decisions as well as for inciting violence and, in isolated cases, even murder.

The **scene of protest** against the government measures to contain the pandemic is heterogeneous in terms of ideology and organisation. Common ground between the different groups and individuals is the categorical rejection of the containment measures taken by the Federal Government and the federal state governments. A part of the protest scene developed this hostile attitude into a fundamental rejection of the existing order of the state and its institutions.

The **Querdenker movement** with its local initiatives all over Germany cannot be understood as a heterogeneous movement either, in spite of its integrating symbols and names. However, starting in the first days of the pandemic, the movement's most important leaders and responsible organisers managed to install themselves as key figures of the protests until mid-2021, when the protests started to decentralise. Single actors of the Querdenker movement indirectly called for an overthrow of the existing political order and the abolition of state institutions.

Time and again, analogies to dictatorial regimes are deliberately drawn in order to deny the legitimacy of current national or federal state governments and of the representative parliamentary democracy as such. A **relativisation of National Socialist crimes** – for example by equating the governmental coronavirus vaccination campaign with the persecution of Jews in the Third Reich – is deliberately accepted in this context as a calculated rupture of a taboo.

Coronavirus-related safety measures and conditions imposed by assembly registration authorities were regularly ignored during demonstrations against the pandemic policy in 2021. Moreover, since the autumn of 2021, members of the police and public order authorities have been confronted with adversary

attitudes. Striking in this context is the increasing perception of “the police as an enemy”, entailing hostilities against executive forces as well as defamations. The resulting escalation of the protests and their turning into violent clashes with the police were meant to impart the picture of a rigorous state denying its citizens their civil rights and to cause solidarity effects in mainstream population. This was supported by distorted and biased reports up to fake news deliberately spread on social media and the Internet.

Moreover, demonstrators have made several attempts to confront politicians on a national, federal or local level in their private lives, which is obviously not only an expression of their will to protest but rather a **purposeful attempt to intimidate** the respective individual. Thus, such intentions are another example illustrating the dynamic development in the field of work of “efforts to delegitimise the state falling within the remit of the German domestic intelligence community” that poses a threat to democracy.

The agitation against democratically legitimised state representatives and their decisions creates a mutual **compatibility with other extremist scenes**. For example, contacts with members of the right-wing extremist scene as well as with “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” have repeatedly come to notice. Members of the right-wing extremist scene, in turn, have tried to actively influence the above-mentioned range of individuals and the protests against the governmental coronavirus-related safety measures.

The **Internet platform Telegram** continues to be the central communication platform for the protests and is mainly used for an unfiltered spreading of ideological contents and for mobilising people for protest events. Even inhuman or violent statements of individual members, including murder scenarios, are often supported or at least go unchallenged in these “eco chambers”. Such statements are regularly accompanied and reinforced by recurring to conspiracy ideologies and by spreading antisemitic narratives.

Overall, instrumentalising the safety measures accompanying the coronavirus pandemic remains in the focus of agitation. Throughout the year, the protests

have become more diversified, both ideologically and regionally, with a significantly stronger influence exerted by right-wing extremist protagonists lately. However, it is likely that subjects of the new field of work of “efforts to delegitimise the state falling within the remit of the German domestic intelligence community” address new topics and use other social crisis situations (for example in connection with the climate protection policy or high energy prices) in order to disparage government bodies and policy makers.

Left-wing extremism

The number of **left-wing extremist sympathisers** (after subtracting multiple memberships) rose by 1.2% to a total of 34,700 in 2021. More than one in four of all left-wing extremists can be classed as violence-oriented.

| Left-wing extremist following ¹ | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| | 2020 | 2021 |
| Violence-oriented left-wing extremists | 9,600 | 10,300 |
| of which, from the autonomist scene | 7,500 | 8,000 |
| Non-violent strictly ideological left-wing extremists and other left-wing extremists | 25,800 | 25,500 |
| Total | 35,400 | 35,800 |
| After subtracting multiple memberships | 34,300 | 34,700 |
| 1 Some of these figures are estimated and rounded off. | | |

Left-wing extremists seek to do away with the existing state and social order, and therefore the free and democratic constitutional system. In its place, they want to establish a communist system or an anarchist society “without rulers”, possibly with a socialist transitional phase, depending on their ideological orientation. With this in mind, issues such as “anti-fascism”, “anti-repression” or “anti-gentrification” are, depending on the circumstances, relevant but ultimately interchangeable areas of action which only serve to advance left-wing extremists’ ideological notions. Left-wing extremists are in principle also willing to use violence to achieve their ends.

At 6,142 offences, the number of **criminal offences motivated by left-wing extremism** stayed at a consistently high level in 2021 despite a decrease of 7.4% (2020: 6,632). The number of **violent left-wing extremist offences** fell by 20.2% to 987 (2020: 1,237), having risen by 34.3% the previous year. One

attempted homicide (2020: 5), 362 cases of bodily injury (2020: 423, a decrease of 14.4%) and 243 cases of resistance to law enforcement officers (2020: 213, an increase of 14.1 %) clearly show that left-wing extremism still has a high propensity for violence. At 3,419 cases (2020: 3,734), property damage remains the most common category of left-wing extremist offence. The number of these offences decreased by about 8%, as did the number of arson offences at 159 (2020: 173). There are no signs that left-wing extremists will end their use of violence. On the contrary, certain violence-oriented groups are committing crimes and violent offences of a more serious nature.

Left-wing extremist attacks are becoming **more targeted and professional**, and their victims are increasingly affected on a personal level. Victims are subjected to highly aggressive attacks in their private or professional environment; their homes, places of business and vehicles are damaged or set on fire in a targeted manner. Repeatedly, there are direct physical attacks on political opponents or the police, sometimes resulting in serious bodily injury. Some of these attacks are so brutal that the perpetrators are apparently willing to kill, or risk killing, their victims.

Developments in the left-wing extremist strongholds of Berlin, Hamburg and Leipzig continue to give cause for concern. But in other federal states, too, small groups are becoming radicalised and isolating themselves from the rest of the scene to commit numerous crimes (including violent crimes) in a clandestine, systematic and highly organised way. If such groups remain isolated and continue to commit so many crimes, some of them involving unrestrained violence, this can lead to a **spiral of radicalisation** and ultimately to terrorist structures.

As the crimes have become more serious, the groups committing them have changed as well. There are indications in several federal states that small clandestine groups are forming within the violence-oriented left-wing extremist scene. These groups carry out their own series of crimes and isolate themselves from the rest of the scene due to their greater willingness to use violence. They feel less and less bound by formerly important considerations, such as

the principle that violence is only acceptable to achieve a certain purpose and only if directed against property, and that it should not harm those who are not involved. Their increasingly violent actions have met with little protest from the rest of the left-wing extremist scene, which instead justifies violence as a supposedly legitimate means of “defence”. In general, the language used has become more extreme. All manner of statements extending to threats of violence or even, in a few cases, subtle death threats, are tacitly tolerated.

The “**anti-fascist struggle**” led by left-wing extremists, which includes the use of violence, is directed against people or institutions that are seen as “fascist” according to the left-wing extremist ideological view of the world. However, this term cannot be clearly defined, and in the left-wing extremist scene there is a tendency to label any political opponent as a “fascist”. Right-wing extremists are regularly labelled “fascist” by the left-wing extremist scene. The term is applied to actual or supposed right-wing extremist people (or entities). In any case, it is always applied to the state and its free and democratic constitutional system. Crimes in this context range from “**exposing**” opponents on the internet, to threats, damage or destruction of property, to setting cars or meeting places typical of the scene on fire, to brutal physical attacks on supposedly “fascist” people, often in their private sphere.

By means of these attacks, left-wing extremist violent offenders not only aim to harm specific victims. The point of maintaining a constant, violent “anti-fascist struggle” is to create a permanent sense of fear in the right-wing and right-wing extremist scene. The goal, at all costs, is to drive political opponents out of public life and prevent them from expressing their undesirable views. For left-wing extremists, the use of violence in the “anti-fascist struggle” is a legitimate and necessary means to an end.

Violence-oriented left-wing extremists see the **police** as their greatest enemy in the fight against the state they so vehemently oppose. By far the most left-wing extremist violent offences are directed at the police: at police officers, their vehicles, facilities or institutions. From the left-wing extremists’ point of view, every injured police officer represents a weakening of the “repressive

state” and also shows their own strength. By consistently focusing on the police as their primary enemy, left-wing extremist groups find it easier to network with other, less ideologically extreme groups.

“Capturing” and defending “**free spaces**” is extremely important for autonomous left-wing extremists. Autonomists do not accept the public order, so they ignore existing ownership of property and establish sites where they hope to follow their own rules for living in a community. These sites may be squats, collective “housing projects” or independently run cultural centres which they view as symbols of resistance free from government supervision, influence or “the logic of capitalist exploitation”. Every kind of state intervention is seen as an attack on their self-determination. At the same time, these “free spaces” serve violence-oriented left-wing extremists as a base for their criminal activity and “militant campaigns” and as a safe haven.

As user contracts or rental agreements expire, as property is sold to new owners or neighbourhoods undergo restructuring, the scene is increasingly forced to abandon its “free spaces”. The situation is exacerbated by state measures such as searches, inspections or evictions. In 2021, such measures were focused on Berlin, with the eviction of the **Meuterei** pub and the **Köpi trailer park** – both key locations in the left-wing extremist scene. And a fire safety inspection at the **Rigaer94** squat was carried out in the face of massive resistance by left-wing extremists.

Violence-oriented left-wing extremists regularly react to such measures with violent protests, property damage and arson attacks. These attacks may be directed at companies involved in the dispute, or at luxury properties or the police. Through these actions they also hope to avoid losing other “free spaces” in the future. The aim is to “drive up the cost” of certain political or economic decisions and thereby to influence decision-makers. Sometimes, personal threats are made against those thought to be responsible for the measures in question, and police officers are attacked. Even when it came to evictions of properties that were less important to members of the scene, high levels of

aggression were still in evidence, both in attacks on the police and in offences committed in reaction or to express solidarity.

Left-wing extremist-motivated arson attacks or damage to vehicles, machines or infrastructure belonging to **private businesses** cause millions of euros of damage in Germany every year. In some cases, such attacks are a response to specific circumstances or events; in general, however, they are intended to strike at the “capitalist system”, which they regard as the “root of all evil”. Many private businesses are seen as “agents of the state” and are attacked just as vigorously as direct state targets.

Through their ostensible support for the **climate protest movement**, left-wing extremists from various parts of the scene attempt to manipulate democratic discourse in order to add their own ideological positions, radicalise social protest and question the legitimacy of the state and its institutions. Violence-oriented left-wing extremists also use alliances to attempt to influence protests. The alliance Ende Gelände (EG), which is influenced by the **Interventionistische Linke** (IL, Interventionist Left), plays a key role in this regard. In 2021, fossil fuel protests focused for the first time not only on lignite mining, but also on natural gas. At around the same time as the elections to the German Bundestag in 2021 (a time of increased public attention to the issue), left-wing extremists tried to dominate the discourse on “the transition to sustainable mobility” as a way of radicalising climate protests.

Alleging that climate policy has failed to yield any concrete successes, left-wing extremists try to portray their actions (including crimes and violent offences) as legitimate means to an end in the political arena. They also reframe the term “**civil disobedience**”. In this way, their deliberate and sometimes violent resistance to the democratically legitimised state monopoly on the use of force is conflated with human and civil rights movements that use non-violent means to protest against injustice.

Parties and organisations of dogmatic left-wing extremists also try to use “climate protests” as a platform for disseminating their ideological positions.

In their view, the cause of climate change is capitalism, which has no other objective than to maximise profit. Their primary aims here are to insert their agenda of “overthrowing the system” into the discourse of democratic climate protests and to appeal to young protesters and recruit them into their organisations.

In 2021, as in other years, the left-wing extremist scene tried to increase its influence through **international networking**. Left-wing extremists exchange ideas with people they know through shared political work. They also regularly discuss ideology, for example at anarchist book fairs, and tactics, for example at “skill-sharing camps”. There is also great potential for mobilisation and networking during protests staged at large international events, or actions taken in solidarity against state measures (e.g. evictions or court cases). Another cooperative approach aims to establish cross-border organisational structures or to initiate cross-border campaigns.

In the context of the **2021 elections to the Bundestag** (in which three left-wing extremist parties took part) as well as **elections to the state parliaments**, left-wing extremists staged numerous, in some cases militant protests and committed 1,450 offences, mainly against parties participating in the elections. Most of these offences involved removing or damaging campaign posters of election candidates. However, they also included disruption of election campaign events, blockades of information stands, damage to and arson attacks on party facilities, exposing politicians believed to be “fascists”, and in some cases physical attacks on election campaign workers.

In the second year of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, the left-wing extremist scene still had not developed its own position regarding the causes and effects of the pandemic. Attempts by left-wing extremists to discredit the state (which they see as “repressive” because, in their view, government pandemic measures only affect disadvantaged segments of society and serve to maintain “capitalism”) and campaigns against the “capitalist” economic system (calling for vaccination patents to be waived) did not succeed or were very short-lived. As the number of demonstrations against pandemic measures decreased in the summer of

2021, so too did the number of offences against alleged “fascists” taking part in such demonstrations. Traditional events in the left-wing extremist scene, such as the “revolutionary demo” held each year on 1 May in Berlin, took place again to some extent at least.

With some 12,100 members and about 50 local groups throughout Germany, **Rote Hilfe e.V.** (RH, Red Aid) is the largest and one of the most important groupings of left-wing extremists in Germany. Its member numbers have increased sharply in the last four years (2020: 11,000; 2019: 10,500; 2018: 9,200; 2017: 8,300). Its main activity is supporting left-wing extremist offenders both during criminal proceedings and when in prison. The organisation provides political and social backing and gives legal and financial support. Rote Hilfe’s actions are intended to minimise the deterrent effects of criminal proceedings and to question the legitimacy of the democratic constitutional state.

Left-wing extremists need to attract public attention in order to spread their ideology. Violence-oriented left-wing extremists also require a public platform from which to explain the necessity of their violent acts and to push their demands. After linksunten.indymedia was banned in August 2017, **the website de.indymedia** became the most important information and propaganda channel for left-wing extremists in German-speaking countries. Many posts on this website relate to left-wing extremist violence and offences, and in some cases the content itself constitutes a criminal offence. For instance, self-incriminating posts encouraging further offences are regularly published. On the de.indymedia website, images and personal data are sometimes published for the purpose of exposing “undesirable” people. Taken as a whole, the posts on de.indymedia clearly show an anti-constitutional stance, and so the website is classed as a verified left-wing extremist instrument.

Islamist extremism/terrorism

Overall, the numbers for 2021 show a year-on-year decrease in the Islamist extremist following of around 1.5 per cent to a total of 28,290 individuals (2020: 28,715).

| Following in the field of Islamist extremism/Islamist terrorism ¹ | | |
|--|---------|---------|
| Organisations | 2020 | 2021 |
| Salafist Groups | 12,150 | 11,900 |
| Islamic State (IS) | | |
| Al-Qaeda Core | | |
| Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQM) | | |
| Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) | no | no |
| Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) | hard | hard |
| Al-Shabab | numbers | numbers |
| Hai'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) | | |
| G. Tanzim Hurras ad-Din (THD): | | |
| Taliban | | |
| Hezb-e Islami-ye Afghanistan (HIA) | 160 | 160 |
| Hezbollah | 1,250 | 1,250 |
| Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (HAMAS) | 450 | 450 |
| Turkish Hezbollah (TH) | 400 | 400 |
| Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT) | 600 | 700 |
| Muslim Brotherhood (MB)/ Deutsche Muslimische Gemeinschaft e.V. (DMG, German Muslim Community) | 1,450 | 1,450 |
| Tablighi Jama'at (TJ) | 650 | 550 |
| Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg e.V. (IZH, Islamic Centre Hamburg) | no | no |
| | hard | hard |
| | numbers | numbers |

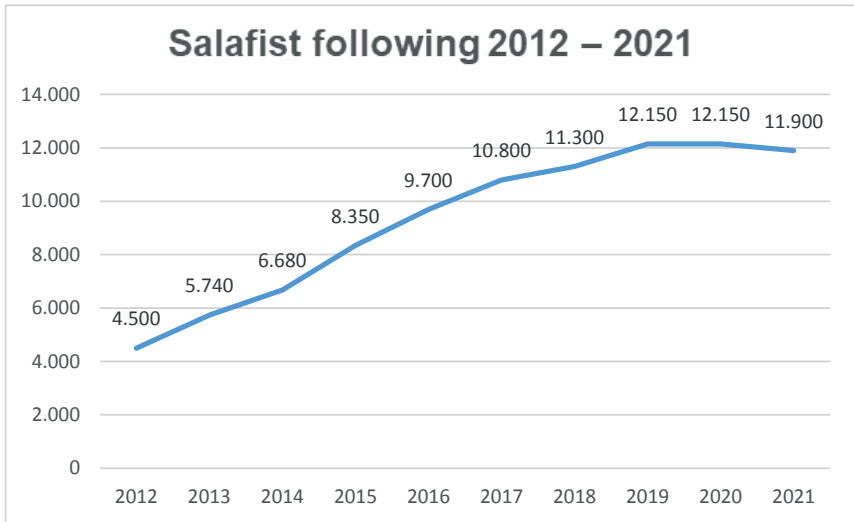
| | | |
|---|--------|--------|
| Millî Görüş movement and affiliated associations (IGMG) | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| Furkan Gemeinschaft (Furkan Community) | 400 | 400 |
| Caliphate State ² | – | 700 |
| Others ³ | 1,205 | 330 |
| <p>1 Figures refer to Germany; they are partly estimated and rounded off. 2 In the previous years the figures of its adherents were included in others. 3 Other organisations whose membership figures and figures of followers are to be taken into account as regards the Islamist extremist following.</p> | | |

Islamist terrorism continues to pose a threat in Germany as well as to German interests and institutions all over the world. Terrorist organisations, Jihadist groups or lone actors – especially with links to Islamic State (IS) – continue their efforts with unabated strength to use every opportunity to stage a terrorist attack. While no complex or multiple attacks directed by terrorist groups from abroad have been committed in Germany so far, such attacks may happen at any time. Most of the attacks carried out over the last few years were lone-perpetrator attacks, which are equally significant for the objectives of terrorist groups because they can also have a strong impact. In Germany and Europe, the threat continues to emanate mainly from lone actors and very small groups inspired by jihadism using means that are easy to obtain and to handle – such as cut-and-thrust weapons. They have been the predominant type of attack in recent years and continue to be an integral part of the terrorist strategy of violence.

In 2021 there was one attack motivated by Islamist extremism in Germany. In some cases, however, it is unclear whether the perpetrators acted out of an Islamist extremist motivation or due to a mental illness. On 6 November 2021 a man all of a sudden stabbed three passengers with a knife on a train in Bavaria. The German security agencies regarded the attack as having been motivated by Islamist extremism.

The **Salafist and jihadist scene** in Germany has changed over the past few years – not least due to state measures. It has become more heterogeneous

and less visible; cross-regional structures have partly been waning. The formerly dynamic growth of the following has most recently stagnated on a high level. **In 2021 the Salafist following decreased to 11,900 persons (2020: 12,150).** This suggests that the Salafist scene has apparently lost its outward appeal. Particularly since the military dismantling of IS and the decline in “classic” Salafist proselytising activities such as seminars on Islam or Koran distributions, Salafism has become less attractive.



The scene’s reduced visibility and dynamism, however, do not make it less dangerous; the decreasing number of followers and the low public presence of the Salafist scene are not to be equated with a weakening of the potential threat. The close links between Salafist actors and jihadist networks persist. The scene is highly dynamic and can react at any time to current developments and outside influences. In conspiratorial, private circles and on the Internet in particular, single individuals may become radicalised, without the authorities or the public at large noticing. There continues to be the risk that Salafism may develop into violence-oriented jihadism.

Since 2019, only isolated cases of **jihadi-motivated departures** or attempted departures for Syria and Iraq have been registered. Currently, there are no signs of a new hotspot of departures. This means that individuals with an affinity for jihad remain in Germany and carry out their activities here. The potential threat emanating from the individuals who have so far returned from the jihadist combat zones can only be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Because of their training, they are generally capable of committing acts of violence without any further support. Still, the security agencies in Germany have so far observed nothing to suggest that returnees from jihad follow any concrete attack plans.

In total, the German security agencies hold intelligence indicating that more than 1,150 individuals who have left Germany for Syria or Iraq out of Islamist extremist motives since 2011 and who are very likely to stay or to have stayed there. Furthermore, there is intelligence on a lower three-digit number of individuals who are currently imprisoned or detained in Syria or Iraq, mostly in the Syrian camps al Hawl and Roj. The majority of the individuals who are imprisoned or in custody abroad intend to return to Germany.

More than one-third of the individuals who are known to have left for Germany for Syria or Iraq have returned. More than 140 of these returnees actively fought in Syria or Iraq or at least underwent relevant training. These individuals continue to be a focus of investigations carried out by the police or the public prosecutor's office. Some of these returnees already had to stand trial before German courts for the crimes committed in Syria and Iraq. Consequently, there were several convictions in that context in 2021 too.

In the field of Islamist extremism/Islamist terrorism, in 2021 the **coronavirus pandemic** continued to fuel the dissemination of known conspiracy theories with partly antisemitic connotations by individual actors and their followers. In that context, the pandemic and its manifold consequences were integrated into the respective ideological narrative. Initially, the virus was mainly seen as a "punishment from God" and a challenge for the Western world; with the worldwide vaccination campaigns progressing in 2021, individual Islamist

extremists started criticising state measures and expressing scepticism about the vaccines. Overall, however, the pandemic played a rather subordinate role for the Islamist extremist scene. No concrete threat aspects came up in connection with the pandemic in the reporting year.

The jihadist **propaganda** in Arabic is still dominated by IS and, to a lesser extent, by al-Qaeda. Even though the jihadist propaganda focused on regions outside Europe, in the reporting period there repeatedly were individual statements containing threats against European countries including Germany. IS continues to spread its propaganda on social media and tries to recruit supporters and to motivate them to commit attacks in their home regions, i.e. also in Europe. As before, the consumption of violence-oriented propaganda significantly contributes to the radicalisation of the mostly young, male perpetrators. The jihadist propaganda activities by IS and al-Qaeda as well as by their followers and sympathisers remained at a high level both in terms of quality and quantity in 2021 again. There repeatedly were threats against Europe and Germany.

The regions in the Middle East and North Africa that continue to be ridden by crises remain a breeding ground for Islamist extremist mobilisation. Following the withdrawal of the international military alliance, the Taliban seized power in **Afghanistan** in August 2021. So far this has not had any direct impacts on the Islamist extremist and jihadist scene in Germany. However, the Taliban's seizure of power is taken up in the propaganda of Islamist extremist and jihadist groups. Numerous positive reactions by various Islamist extremist movements after the Taliban's seizure of power have shown that the incidents had a motivating effect on Islamist extremists. If other terrorist groups – especially al-Qaeda – get the chance to reorganise themselves in Afghanistan now and to plan terrorist activities against Western states, this would have an influence on the threat situation in Germany in the medium to long term.

The **Middle East conflict** also has an effect on the Islamist extremist scene in Germany: In May 2021 the latent tensions between Israel and HAMAS escalated into open military clashes, reaching their peak since 2014. In Germany, the military escalation led to a large number of pro-Palestinian or anti-Israel

rallies and demonstrations. Almost throughout the entire time anti-Israel, in some cases also antisemitic, slogans were chanted or displayed on placards at the demonstrations and on their sidelines. Not only at demonstrations and rallies but also on the Internet and on social media have antisemitic statements seen a particularly strong increase.

Antisemitism is an essential element in the ideology of the entire Islamist extremist spectrum. The German domestic intelligence community identified a large number of antisemitic incidents. Following the military escalation between Israel and HAMAS in May 2021, the number of antisemitic incidents dramatically increased in Germany. The majority of the antisemitic incidents registered by the German domestic intelligence community are contributions on the Internet. Furthermore, offences of bodily harm and attacks on synagogues were determined.

Countering **terrorist financing** is an integral part of the security agencies' overall strategy to fight terrorism and extremism. By investigating and prosecuting the financial activities of extremist and terrorist individuals or organisations as well as by identifying the associated (financial) networks, not only the financing of individual terrorist acts but rather the scope for action of extremist and terrorist organisational structures are strongly limited long before an attack occurs; as a consequence, among other things, the related propaganda and recruitment efforts are also severely disrupted. When investigating into terrorist financing activities, a particular focus is placed on established alternative financial transfer methods, such as Hawala banking, and the area of new technologies. For instance, the use of cryptocurrencies for obfuscating financial transfers, but also for generating funds, is becoming ever more important in the field of Islamist extremism.

Foreign extremism

The number of followers of non-Islamist extremist organisations and extremist organisations of foreigners posing a threat to security amounted to a total of 28,650 individuals in 2021 and thus remained at the same level as in the previous year. As before, the largest organisation in Germany in terms of numbers is the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) counting 14,500 followers.

| Followers of foreign extremism in Germany¹ | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| | 2020 | 2021 |
| Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) | 14,500 | 14,500 |
| Turkish right-wing extremists | 11,000 | 11,000 |
| Turkish left-wing extremists | 2,550 | 2,550 |
| Others | 600 | 600 |
| Total | 28,650 | 28,650 |

¹ Some of these figures are estimated and rounded off.

The coronavirus-pandemic had a limiting effect on events that are important to foreign extremism. Indeed, a significantly lower number of high-profile events took place in 2021, and the attendance was at a lower level than in the years prior to the pandemic. The activities of associations were also restricted. On the whole, however, a small increase compared to the previous year's level has been observed. From spring 2021 onwards, first small events started to take place along with a revival of local association activities.

After a decline in the previous year, the number of criminal offences and violent acts motivated by foreign extremism increased again in 2021. 776 offences were registered in total, which is an increase by 17.4 per cent (2020: 661). The acts of violence clearly increased by 46.8 per cent (2021: 116, 2020: 79). The growth in criminal offences is probably a result of the number of events and protests that has increased again compared to the previous year.

In addition to offences that are typical of such assemblies, there are repeated violent clashes of adherents of hostile political camps.

For the very most part, the political agitation of the extremist organisations of foreigners as well as their respective level of militancy depend on the political developments in their home countries. As a rule, their followers in Germany are given politico-strategic guidelines by the organisations in their respective home countries, and they are ready to consistently put them into practice. One main field of activity of the various organisations in Germany related to foreign extremism is fundraising. First of all, these funds serve the financing of own structures and activities in Germany and Europe, but part of the money is also transferred to the parent organisations in their home countries.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), and the right-wing extremist Ülkücü movement are of particular relevance to Germany's internal security: PKK because of violent actions undertaken in its home region, DHKP-C with its overt commitment to armed conflict in Turkey and the Ülkücü movement due to its partly militant denial of the principle of equality. Moreover, the Turkish right-wing extremism as well as extremist Palestinians show an overt antisemitism.

In Europe, **PKK** has been striving for years to convey a largely non-violent appearance. The ongoing military conflicts in the home region, however, continue to cause a high emotionality among its adherents also in Germany. As a result of the situation in the Kurdish settlement areas in Turkey, Northern Syria and Northern Iraq, PKK still manages to mobilise its followers for demonstrations related to specific incidents and for events held every year.

PKK's activities, particularly in the first six months of 2021, were significantly restricted by the governmental measures taken in connection with the coronavirus pandemic. This is why the scope of the organisation's actions, which are usually extensive and important, once more narrowed sharply compared to the previous years. The amount of money gained from the 2020/21 "annual

fundraising campaign” amounted to an estimated €16.7 million and set a new record.

Moreover, one suspected PKK adherent killed himself by self-immolation during the reporting year, as last happened in 2019. According to PKK media, this form of action was criticised repeatedly by several PKK organisations and by the PKK founder Abdullah Öcalan, but the organisation nevertheless instrumentalises these acts in order to draw attention to its interests.

Campaigns of the **DHKP-C** in Germany in 2021 were, besides current events in the home country, mainly characterised and motivated by the movement of international solidarity with prisoners. Despite numerous demonstrations, it could be observed that the organisation has growing difficulties to mobilise its adherents in Germany to participate in demonstrations, rallies or internal events. Because of the repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic, during the reporting period, also DHKP-C had to cancel some of its propagandistically important events and rallies as well as concerts by the music band Grup Yorum associated with it. The clearly increased participation in the public politico-propagandist activities resulting from the death fast of imprisoned adherents in 2020 was of a temporary nature. Lately, DHKP-C has in vain tried to take this campaign up.

Approximately 9,400 of the c. 11,000 followers of the **Ülkücü** movement living in Germany are organised in three large umbrella organisations. Keen to convey a public image of moderateness, these umbrella organisations cultivate their right-wing extremist ideology chiefly internally, in particular in their associations.

The non-organised followers of the **Ülkücü** movement act out their mostly racist or antisemitic enemy concepts in various ways, often on social media but also when meeting their political opponents in public, especially the Kurds. Such occasions repeatedly reveal the great potential for violence that predominates in the non-organised scene. The main emotional point of reference is Turkey and the conflict between Turkey and the Kurdish PKK. The

scene which is widely unstructured or organised in transitory organisations shows an almost completely unconditional loyalty with the Turkish state and its current leadership.

PKK remains the largest organisation in terms of members and efficiency within the field of non-Islamist foreign extremism in Germany. Previously, there had repeatedly been spontaneous mutual criminal and violent offences, chiefly during demonstrations and especially between Turkish right-wing extremists not organised in associations and young PKK followers. Regardless of the improvement of the situation, which is entirely due to the pandemic, this tension will continue to pose a threat to internal security in Germany.

In the field of non-Islamist foreign extremism in Germany, **antisemitism** plays a relevant role mainly in Turkish right-wing extremism and among extremist Palestinians. As to other forms of foreign extremism, however, antisemitism is not an ideological core element – in many cases even for lacking regional, religious or political points of reference. Only left-wing extremist Turks may occasionally make anti-Israel statements, which are not primarily centred on religion and ethnicity, though, but on the territorial conflict with the Palestinians.

A high degree of ostentatious antisemitism can mainly be observed with Palestinian extremist individuals. Numerous calls for violence against Jews are spread on social media by members of this spectrum. This scene's ability to mobilise followers also in Germany was illustrated by its response to the Middle-East conflict that was stirred up once again following the missile attacks of the Islamist extremist HAMAS against Israel in the second half of 2021. Attendance numbers in the three to four-digit range were easily reached during frequent spontaneous rallies. Antisemitic acts and slogans were observed in the course of these protests. Accordingly, the number of antisemitic offences increased considerably in 2021. A total of 122 criminal offences (2020: 36) had an antisemitic background, among them three cases of bodily harm (2020: 3) and 58 cases of incitement to hatred (2020: 10).

Intelligence activities, espionage, cyber attacks and other activities which threaten security, carried out on behalf of a foreign power

The increasingly complex espionage activities of foreign powers pose a serious threat to Germany and to German interests. Foreign powers use their intelligence services and other means available to them against the Federal Republic of Germany to gain information, exert influence and advance their own interests.

Germany's active role in the EU, NATO and other international organisations makes it a target for a wide range of political espionage. Companies and research institutions are a target of industrial and academic espionage by foreign intelligence services. One particularly serious threat emanates from state-sponsored terrorism in which foreign intelligence services or other structures controlled by foreign states play a key role.

Espionage, undue foreign interference and state-sponsored terrorism have considerable negative impacts on Germany: they can weaken our foreign policy negotiating positions or interfere with the free democratic process. When foreign intelligence services in Germany gather information on opposition groups from non-EU countries and infiltrate these groups, this not only creates a climate of fear but also threatens people's lives and health. The unlawful actions of foreign intelligence services are also detrimental to Germany's national sovereignty and social cohesion, and do considerable damage to companies and to the economy as a whole. The activities of foreign powers include acquiring expertise and products to develop and manufacture weapons of mass destruction and missile technology.

The **main actors** in espionage directed against Germany, cyber attacks directed by intelligence services, proliferation and influence operations are – with differing areas of focus – the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey. However, through

“360° processing”, all intelligence services active in Germany are monitored if there is evidence of intelligence activities in Germany.

Cyber attacks directed by intelligence services which target political or administrative entities and take place around the time of elections may be carried out as preliminary steps for publishing hacked information with the goal of influencing public opinion. In 2021, therefore, the abstract threat level was elevated for the federal general elections and for the elections that took place in five federal states. Although no concrete harm was identified, intensive attack activity was observed in Germany in 2021 – for example, attacks by the hacker Ghostwriter. At the National Cyber Defence Centre, which the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) takes part in, information is shared regularly among the authorities responsible for cyber security in order to effectively counter the high risk of cyber attacks.

In the run-up to the federal general elections, it also became clear that some countries were using their state media apparatus, including social media accounts, to spread and stoke biased claims about certain parties and individuals. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, such media formats have been giving a platform to polemical criticism of the government with the aim of establishing narratives hostile to democracy.

In **hybrid threats**, the perpetrators attack the institutions of democratic states in a centrally directed way, generally while concealing the source of the attack. They target the state’s ability to function and deliberately exploit weaknesses in systems in order to influence or disrupt decision-making processes. Foreign state actors dedicate the full capacity of their intelligence services to such attacks, but also make use of other governmental agencies or state-influenced organisations. The BfV takes part in the cooperation among federal ministries and other federal authorities in recognising and deterring such hybrid threats.

The activities of **Russian intelligence services** in Germany have been at a consistently high level for many years. Their espionage activities target the

political, business, research, tech and military spheres, with varying degrees of intensity.

Russian intelligence services focus on all fields of policy which potentially relate to Russia. Germany's alliance policy is a particular area of focus, but foreign and economic policy are also priorities. In terms of German domestic policy, the Russian intelligence services try to gather information on political party structures and developments and the policy positions of individual political parties. In election year 2021, they also sought information on potential election outcomes and possible resulting coalitions.

In light of the ongoing EU sanctions against the Russian Federation that have been heightened due to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, Russian intelligence services have a particularly strong interest in acquiring information about European-level discussion processes and potentially divergent positions among European countries.

Russian intelligence services make extensive use of **cyber attacks**. The observed attack operations generally seek to acquire information, but in some cyber attack operations Russian intelligence services have also shown a willingness to engage in sabotage. Such activities may target specific individuals or entire countries and may seek to stoke political or social tensions or to undermine trust in public authorities.

In the reporting period, the BfV's preventive counter-espionage measures led the Federal Public Prosecutor General (GBA) to initiate investigative proceedings in multiple cases.

Beyond this, the December 2021 ruling in the case known as the Tiergarten murder shows the gravity of the potential threat posed by Russian intelligence services. The Berlin Higher Regional Court found convincing proof that the Russian perpetrator using an alias was acting on behalf of Russian state entities when he killed a Georgian citizen in Berlin.

China's intelligence services have wide-ranging powers, which they use largely to maintain the power of the ruling Communist Party. The country and party leaders ambitiously aim to expand their power and influence, to transform their economy into a global leader among industrialised nations which has greater independence from the global economy, and to become a market and technological leader in strategic sectors. Intelligence services play a key role in the pursuit of these ambitions. They also engage in intelligence activities that seek to generate a more positive image of Chinese policy.

The demand of China's government and party leaders for information on supranational entities such as the EU as well as on Western alliance policy, major international events and international organisations such as the World Health Organisation is growing in tandem with China's importance as a global player. In Germany, Chinese intelligence services focus on the fields of politics and administration, the business sector, academic research, the technology sector and the military. They also act against Chinese opposition groups. To achieve its ambitious industrial policy aims, China uses industrial and academic espionage, acquires partial or full ownership of German cutting-edge technology firms and engages in targeted recruitment of experts. Chinese intelligence services focus on the structure, armaments and training of the Bundeswehr, and on the acquisition of modern weapons technology from the German security and defence industries. The opposition movements which Chinese authorities combat and call the "Five Poisons" include the movements of the Uyghur and Tibetan ethnic minorities seeking more independence, the anti-regime Falun Gong movement, the democracy movement and the movement advocating sovereignty for the island of Taiwan. The Chinese authorities are also focused on the Hong Kong democracy movement.

The Chinese legal residencies in Germany mainly gather publicly available information. Residency officers also gather information by cultivating seemingly harmless contacts. Current and former political and business decision-makers are particularly targeted as potential contacts. The intelligence services' activities also include monitoring and managing Chinese nationals living in Germany. Close institutional ties with Chinese companies, student organisations and

cultural associations and institutions are intended to ensure adherence to the party line and strengthen the sense of a unified front abroad. This also includes instrumentalising members of the Chinese diaspora for measures against members of the Chinese opposition.

In Chinese cyber espionage since 2018, we have seen increased attention to political targets in Europe and specifically in Germany, as well as in other Western countries, along with the continuing economic focus of **Chinese cyber attacks** targeting businesses in the technology, chemicals, shipping and defence industries. In a March 2021 attack by the Chinese hacker group Hafnium, which is suspected of working at the behest of the Chinese state, some 500 institutions were found to have been attacked in Germany alone.

Iran's intelligence-gathering activities are shaped by the situation in the Middle East. Iran sees itself as a regional power with a marked anti-Western and anti-Israel orientation. This means that the Iranian regime is interested in information on the future policy of the West – for example Germany's foreign and security policy.

Iran's declared enemies include not only the U.S. but also the State of Israel and its representatives and prominent supporters. These may include leading representatives of organisations in the Jewish diaspora. Iranian espionage therefore continues to include spying on (pro-) Israeli and (pro-) Jewish targets in Germany.

Intelligence agencies of the Islamic Republic of Iran also use **state-sponsored terrorism** as a means to achieve their goals. Key goals of state-sponsored terrorism are to intimidate and neutralise opposition members and to punish those viewed as “traitors” or “turncoats”. In February 2021, a Belgian court sentenced a former Iranian diplomat and member of an Iranian intelligence service to a lengthy prison term for planning a terrorist attack on an event held by an Iranian opposition organisation. This is the first time since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 that a member of the Iranian government has been charged and convicted in the EU for planning a state-sponsored terrorist attack. In

recent years, there have also been multiple cases in Europe of abductions of Iranian opposition figures by Iranian intelligence services, which have taken them back to Iran.

Turkish intelligence services and security agencies are keenly interested in intelligence concerning individuals and organisations which oppose or are thought to oppose the Turkish government. Their intelligence-gathering focuses above all, however, on organisations which Turkey classifies as extremist or terrorist. These activities by the Turkish intelligence services and security authorities are accompanied by attempts to influence the Turkish community in Germany. Such efforts can also have an impact on political views throughout German society.

Despite considerable technological progress in some areas, countries that seek **weapons of mass destruction** remain dependent on the global market for developing and manufacturing such weapons and the related delivery systems. They also seek to acquire the needed goods and knowledge in Germany. Strict German and European export controls prevent such goods from being purchased on regular markets. Countries pursuing proliferation try to get around these controls. In 2021, the domestic intelligence agencies identified a significant increase in the evidence of **Iranian attempts to acquire** proliferation-sensitive material for Iran's nuclear programme.

The BfV also has indications of **Russian proliferation-related activities** involving governmental and semi-governmental actors and seeking to evade sanctions and disguise the actual end user of materials. In most cases, the products in question are dual-use goods that are sought for military or proliferation-related end use. Despite vague information about the purpose and end use of the materials, in some cases the BfV's counterintelligence was able to specifically determine that the materials were intended for use in a certain part of Russia's weapons programme. Intensive future acquisition efforts by Russia are to be expected.

In terms of **prevention**, the BfV helps to ensure that private industry, the research community, and politicians, political organisations and government administration can protect themselves against information-gathering, illegal transfer of knowledge and technology, sabotage and extremist and terrorist threats. In 2021, in line with the applicable COVID-related protective measures, the BfV resumed its outreach measures and used security information tailored to potentially threatened companies and institutions to increase their awareness of the espionage and sabotage activities of foreign states.

Security of classified material, personnel security and counter-sabotage

Information that could endanger or harm the existence, the security or the interests of the Federation or a federal state if it became known requires special protection. Only sufficiently reliable individuals may be granted access to such information. Personnel security is responsible for ascertaining this reliability through background checks. The instruments used for this are set out in the Act on Prerequisites and Procedures for Security Clearance Checks Undertaken by the Federal Government⁷ (Security Clearance Check Act (*Sicherheitsüberprüfungsgesetz, SÜG*)).

Protection against sabotage is intended to keep vital and defence-essential facilities safe against sabotage by “insiders”.

Security clearance checks are a crucial element of personnel security and counter-sabotage. Such checks determine whether an individual is sufficiently reliable to work in a security-sensitive position. The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) plays a key role in conducting security clearance checks of current or prospective staff of federal agencies, other federal bodies, and private enterprises,⁸ and it is responsible for taking the measures in connection with security checks on behalf of the competent bodies. These measures vary depending on the type of check required.

Last year, the BfV contributed to more than 75,000 security clearance checks related to the security of classified information and protection against sabotage. From 2008 to 2017, the BfV contributed to an average of 32,000 security clearance checks each year. Its workload has therefore more than doubled within only a few years. The BfV responded to this situation by designing, testing and ultimately introducing largely digital working processes.

⁷ Classified material is defined as sensitive facts, objects or intelligence, regardless of the forms these take, which must be kept secret in the public interest, in particular to protect the welfare of the country as a whole or of one of the federal states.

⁸ Whether a security clearance check is necessary is determined by the employer responsible or, if the employee in question is employed by a private enterprise, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK). The BfV is responsible for conducting these measures.

In 2021, 13,780 simple security checks, 36,530 extended security checks and 2,780 extended security checks including security investigations were carried out in connection with the security of classified information. Another 7,590 checks were done in connection with counter-sabotage, along with 14,460 updates of security checks.

The Scientology Organisation (SO)

The Scientology organisation (SO) seeks to establish a global society based on Scientology. The SO has some 3,600 members in Germany, which represents a slight increase in the past year (from 3,500).

The organisation's ideology is strictly based on the writings of founder and leading figure in the movement Lafayette Ron Hubbard (1911–1986), who invented a method he called “technology”, “dianetics” and “Scientology”. This method is intended to create the perfect human, called “clear” or “non-aberrated”. In Hubbard's teachings, people who are not “clear” are to be denied fundamental rights and human dignity. The SO sees itself as a ruling elite that should reign over the rest of humanity. This worldview is incompatible with the principle of democracy enshrined in Germany's constitution, the Basic Law.

Scientology seeks to attain its envisaged social order via a long-term strategy of expansion, by increasing the organisation's revenues and by fighting its critics. The SO presents itself to the outside world as an apolitical religious community.

In response to the contact restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SO expanded its online course and seminar offerings during the reporting year. But it also continued its activities in the offline world, such as the typical Scientology information stands, despite the COVID-related restrictions.

During the reporting year, Scientology “Volunteer Ministers” participated in relief and clean-up activities after the catastrophic flooding in western and southern Germany. The SO also sought to exert political influence through its affiliated organisation Kommission für Verstöße der Psychiatrie gegen Menschenrechte Deutschland e.V. (KVPM, committee for human rights violations by psychiatrists).

In comparison to the previous year, there was also an increase in the Germany-wide distribution of the booklet “Der Weg zum Glücklichein” (The Way to

Happiness) by the SO cover organisation The Way to Happiness. Additionally, materials specifically designed for children were distributed for the first time, a reflection of the organisation's growing efforts to influence children.

The SO also complained to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights about German authorities' alleged violations of Scientologists' human rights. Through such activities, the SO seeks to gain political relevance and acceptance in order to advance its own expansion.

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It is not only illiterates who are excluded from the benefits of modernization. The vast majority of the world's population lives in rural areas, where the benefits of modernization are also limited.

As a result, the vast majority of the world's population is excluded from the benefits of modernization. This is a serious problem that needs to be addressed.

One way to address this problem is to improve the quality of education. This will help to reduce the number of illiterates and to improve the skills of the workforce.

Another way to address this problem is to improve the infrastructure of rural areas. This will help to improve the quality of life and to attract investment.

Finally, it is important to ensure that the benefits of modernization are shared by all. This will help to reduce inequality and to improve the quality of life for all.

These are some of the ways to address the problem of exclusion from the benefits of modernization. It is important to take action now to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from modernization.

By improving the quality of education, the infrastructure of rural areas, and ensuring that the benefits of modernization are shared by all, we can help to create a more inclusive and sustainable world.

This is the goal of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. It is a goal that we should all strive to achieve.

Let us work together to create a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from modernization.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,
[Signature]

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