



Federal Ministry
of the Interior, Building
and Community

Brief summary 2019 Report on the Protection of the Constitution

Facts and Trends



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2019 REPORT ON THE PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION
FACTS AND TRENDS

Politically motivated crime¹

The Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) registered a total of 41,177 politically motivated offences in 2019—an increase of 14.2% compared with the previous year (2018: 36,062). This figure includes 16,182 propaganda offences (39.3%; 2018: 14,088 or 39.1%). The number of violent crimes that were categorised as politically motivated fell from 3,366 in 2018 to 2,832 in 2019.

Of the total number of politically motivated offences, 31,472 (or 76.4%) were found to have an extremist background (2018: 27,656, or 76.7%), of which 2,017 (2018: 1,244) could not be assigned to any particular category.

Key points:

- The overall number of right-wing extremist offences increased by 9.7%. The number of violent crimes fell by almost 15%. Among these violent crimes, all homicide cases (five attempted and two successful) were motivated by xenophobia. These included the murder of the Regional Commissioner of Kassel (Hesse) and the attack on a synagogue in Halle (Saxony-Anhalt).
- The number of criminal offences with a left-wing extremist background rose by 39.5% in 2019, while that of violent crimes fell by 8.8%. There was a particularly striking increase in the number of violent crimes “against the state, its institutions and symbols” and related to protests against urban renewal.
- The number of extremist offences characterised as “politically motivated crime—foreign ideology” came to 1,354, a reduction of almost 30%.

Details:

In the category of **right-wing politically motivated crime**, 21,290 offences (2018: 19,409) were recorded as having an extremist background. The number of violent crimes with a right-wing extremist background fell by 15% compared with the previous year (2019: 925; 2018: 1,088). While there were six attempted homicides in 2018, in 2019 there were five attempted homicides and two successful homicides. As in the

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

previous year, all homicide cases were motivated by xenophobia. The number of violent xenophobic offences fell by 15.3% to 695 (2018: 821). Attacks motivated by right-wing extremism on accommodation centres for asylum seekers fell again in 2019 (2019: 116; 2018: 164). Violent crimes by right-wing extremists against actual or supposed left-wing extremists fell by 17.7% to 93 (2018: 113).

In 2019, 589 extremist offences were attributed to “**Reichsbürger**” (“citizens of the Reich”) and “**Selbstverwalter**” (“sovereign citizens”) (2018: 776). Of these, 121 were violent crimes (2018: 160), chiefly extortion (81) or resistance to law enforcement officers (30). Coercion and threats also accounted for a considerable number of offences (156).

In the category of **left-wing politically motivated crime**, 6,449 offences (2018: 4,622) were recorded as having an extremist background. Of this number, 921 were violent crimes (2018: 1,010). This means that offences committed by left-wing extremists rose by 39.5%, while violent crimes fell by 8.8%. There was a particularly striking increase (by 85.1% to 385) in violent crimes “against the state, its institutions and symbols”. Violent crimes related to protests against urban renewal more than tripled, to 174.

In 2019, the number of extremist offences in the category of **politically motivated crime—religious ideology** decreased to 362 (2018: 453). Forty-one of these offences were violent crimes: one of these was attempted homicide and 32 were cases of bodily injury. Sixty-three offences (2018: 63) were categorised as “preparation of a serious violent offence endangering the state” (see section 89a, 89b, 89c and section 91 of the Criminal Code (Strafgesetzbuch, StGB)), while 64 offences (2018: 144) fell into the category of membership or support of a foreign terrorist organisation (see section 129b of the Criminal Code).

In the category of **politically motivated crime—foreign ideology**, 1,354 offences (2018: 1,928) had an extremist background. These offences were predominantly breaches of the Act Governing Private Associations (Vereinsgesetz, VereinsG) (45.2%) and criminal damage (12.1%), but also included 248 violent crimes (18.3%). The number of violent crimes has fallen in comparison with 2018 (355 violent crimes), but they continue to represent almost the same proportion of extremist offences (2018: 18.4%). The majority are cases of bodily injury (58.1%) and offences involving

resistance to law enforcement officers (31.9%). The violent crimes in the reporting year did not include any homicides, whereas in 2018 one successful and four attempted homicides were recorded.

Right-wing extremism/terrorism

By the end of 2019, the number of right-wing extremist sympathisers totalled 32,080, after subtracting multiple memberships (2018: 24,100). The number of right-wing extremists classed as violence-oriented rose to 13,000 (2018: 12,700).

Right-wing extremist following¹		
	2018	2019
Political party membership	5,510	13,330
Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD, National-Democratic Party of Germany)	4,000	3,600
DIE RECHTE (The Right)	600	550
Der III. Weg (The Third Way)	530	580
Membership of other right-wing extremist parties ²	380	8,600
Membership of groups/organisations not affiliated with or independent of political parties ³	6,600	6,600
No membership of any right-wing extremist grouping/organisation ⁴	13,240	13,500
Total	25,350	33,430
After subtracting multiple memberships	24,100	32,080
Of which violence-oriented right-wing	12,700	13,000
<p>1 Some of these figures are estimated and rounded off.</p> <p>2 Including members of the AfD (Alternative für Deutschland, Alternative for Germany) (the AfD itself is not an official intelligence target) sub-organisations Junge Alternative (JA, Young Alternative) (suspected threat (<i>Verdachtsfall</i>)) and Der Flügel (German for “the wing”, suspected threat (<i>Verdachtsfall</i>) in the reporting period); the Freie Bürger Union (FBU) Landesverband Saarland (union of free citizens, Saarland state association); and the small Bavarian party Deutsche Konservative (German Conservatives). There is evidence that the JA and the “wing” engage in right-wing extremist activities, which is why they were under full surveillance as a suspected threat by the BfV during the period under review.</p> <p>3 This includes some of the 950 right-wing extremist “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” who are organised in cross-regional groups, as well as 600 members of the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (IDB, Identitarian Movement Germany).</p> <p>4 This includes some of the 950 right-wing extremist “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” who do not belong to any organised group.</p>		

In comparison with 2018, right-wing extremist **criminal offences and violent crimes** developed as follows in 2019: the total number of criminal offences rose by 9.7% to 21,290 (2018: 19,409). The number of violent

crimes fell by 15% during the reporting year (2019: 925; 2018: 1,088). Cases of bodily injury, which at more than 84% represented the majority of violent crimes, fell by 16.7%. Following a rise in the number of violent right-wing extremist crimes with a xenophobic background in 2018, this figure fell by 18.6% in 2019 (2019: 627; 2018: 770). The total number of violent xenophobic offences also fell, by 15.3% overall (2019: 695; 2018: 821). Only a small number of arson attacks motivated by right-wing extremism were recorded (2019: 6; 2018: 11).

Seven homicide cases motivated by right-wing extremism were recorded in 2019, of which two were successful. These were the murder of the Regional Commissioner of Kassel in Wolfhagen (Hesse) and the attempted attack on the synagogue in Halle resulting in two deaths. These two crimes show that even with a drop in violent crimes motivated by right-wing extremism, dangers now exist in right-wing extremism not only within established right-wing extremist structures, but can also develop on the fringes or outside of the right-wing extremist scene.

Antisemitism is an important element of right-wing extremist ideology across most of the spectrum. It is deeply entrenched in right-wing extremist parties. The party DIE RECHTE (The Right) nominated Ursula Haverbeck-Wetzel, who has been convicted multiple times for Holocaust denial, as top candidate on its list for the 2019 elections to the European Parliament. The party Der III. Weg (The Third Way) talks about the “Zionist cancer in the Middle East”. Statements by individuals within the right-wing spectrum or persons who are not affiliated with an organisation represent an ever-growing share of antisemitic offences recorded. Right-wing extremists use the Internet as an instrument of propaganda and communication for disseminating antisemitic ideology. The armed attack by a 27-year-old gunman on a synagogue in Halle on 9 October 2019, which killed two people and left seven injured, in some cases severely, shows that antisemitism can even be a motive for homicide. The perpetrator’s aggressive antisemitism was clear from a text he published online.

The incidence of right-wing **demonstrations** had already increased in 2018 in connection with the killing of a German national by an asylum seeker in Chemnitz. The number of demonstrations only increased

slightly, and there was a sharp rise in the number of participants. The importance of right-wing extremist agitation directed against asylum seekers was not reflected in the incidence of demonstrations in 2019. The number of **demonstrations nationwide by right-wing extremists** fell by around 20% to 186 in 2019 from 233 in 2018, making it considerably lower than the figure in 2017 as well (202). Participant numbers decreased by more than half, to approx. 20,650 (2018: approx. 58,000), which is still higher than the figure from 2017 of approx. 16,400.

Interest in **martial arts** remains high among right-wing extremists. Right-wing extremists are learning martial arts techniques and/or sharing these among themselves in increasing numbers. Martial arts events are increasingly professional in nature, and the attendance of foreign competitors enables right-wing extremists within the martial arts scene to build networks throughout Europe.

The right-wing extremist martial arts scene, which has increased in strength in recent years, was subject to official measures in 2019: the right-wing martial arts tournament “Battle of the Nibelungs” (KdN), which has attracted ever-increasing numbers of visitors in recent years (2018: 850) and which was to take place on 12 October 2019 in Ostritz (Saxony), was banned by the local police and public order authorities.

Music and **music events** remain important for the right-wing extremist scene. They continue to make a strong contribution to disseminating right-wing extremist ideology, recruiting new members to the scene and building international networks with other right-wing extremists. A number of large-scale music events took place again in 2019 that were each attended by more than 500 people, a higher number of participants than most other right-wing extremist events such as right-wing extremist demonstrations, vigils, torchlit marches and internal meetings.

The event known as the “National Movement Days” on 5 and 6 July in Themar (Thuringia), with up to 920 right-wing extremist participants, was the largest event in terms of attendance. In Ostritz (Saxony), two major events featuring music and speakers were held as part of the “Shield and Sword” festival series on a site that had already been used several times for right-wing extremist events. Attendance was, however, lower than at events in this series in 2018.

German right-wing extremists maintained the same level of **co-operation with foreign right-wing extremists** in the reporting year. The use of social networks plays a prominent role in international networking among right-wing extremists. Alongside institutionalised contacts, these relationships with foreign right-wing extremists are predominantly based on personal acquaintances. Annual right-wing extremist commemoration events organised centrally, such as the “Day of Honour” on 9 February 2019 in Budapest, Hungary, or the “Lukov March” in Sophia, Bulgaria, on 16 February 2019, remain a focal point for international networking by right-wing extremists. The number of German right-wing extremist participants remains high and continues to increase.

The international association “Festung Europa” (Fortress Europe) was formed during a meeting of European right-wing extremists on 20 and 21 April 2019 in Sofia. Its members include German party DIE RECHTE.

Right-wing extremist **networking ambitions** are clear in the music scene, in mixed subcultures (such as hooligans or bikers), in co-operation with foreign right-wing extremists, and in other right-wing extremist groupings. Detecting relevant, dangerous right-wing networks is an ongoing priority for the German domestic intelligence agencies.

The public and electoral importance of **party structures** which long formed the basis for right-wing extremism in Germany, such as DIE RECHTE, Der III. Weg and the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD, National Democratic Party of Germany) has been waning in recent years. Nonetheless, right-wing extremist parties remain important to some degree for the internal structure of the right-wing extremist scene.

The **NPD** remains a relevant element of the right-wing extremist spectrum. However, the trend of falling member numbers and weak election results which has been ongoing for a number of years continued in 2019. The number of members fell in the reporting year to around 3,600 (2018: 4,000). The year 2019 was marked by the European Parliamentary elections and three federal state elections. The NPD lost its one seat in the European Parliament, which had been held by former party leader Udo Voigt. The weak election results led to a loss of income from public funding.

With a voting share of 0.3% (101,011 votes) in the 2019 European Parliamentary elections, the NPD lost around two-thirds of the votes obtained in 2014, when it received 1.0% (301,139 votes). There was no NPD candidate for the state election in Brandenburg. The party experienced a major defeat in the state election on the same day in its former spiritual homeland of Saxony, receiving only 0.6% of second votes. The result of the state election in Thuringia, where it received 0.5% percent of votes, was also disappointing for the NPD. This meant that the party did not exceed the one-percent share of the votes required to access partial state funding for participation in state elections.

In spite of these election results, the party remained able to act and campaign at a basic level in 2019. It launched its “Schutzzonen” (safe haven) campaign in an attempt to generate maximum media resonance with little effort.

The deputy party leader Thorsten Heise organised two “Shield and Sword” festivals in Ostritz (Saxony) in 2018, which were the product of a redirected party strategy focusing on events and campaigns. The NPD continued with this strategy, organising a concert in March 2019 and a two-day festival in June 2019. However, neither of these events was as successful as the 2018 events.

The minor right-wing extremist party **DIE RECHTE** is made up of eight federal state associations with around 20 local associations and a small number of “bases”. Some associations at local or state level are currently being established, have existed only for a few months, are inactive or are being re-established without having been formally dissolved. Other associations only exist in name and have not as yet been active. This is reflected in falling party member numbers (2019: 550; 2018: 600). North Rhine-Westphalia remains the party’s heartland.

DIE RECHTE held their 10th national party conference on 5 January 2019, electing Sascha Krolzig and Sven Skoda as new national party leaders.

The party contested the European parliamentary elections in May 2019 with a candidate list including Holocaust denier Ursula Haverbeck-Wetzel as top candidate on the list and consisting mainly of neo-Nazis who had served time in prison in the past for serious offences. During the European parliamentary election campaign, DIE RECHTE used a poster

with the slogan ZIONISMUS STOPPEN: ISRAEL IST UNSER UNGLÜCK! SCHLUSS DAMIT! (Stop Zionism: Israel is our misfortune. Put an end to it!), which is reminiscent of the Nazi slogan “The Jews are our misfortune”. The party suffered a major defeat, polling 24,598 votes, or 0.1% of the total, which shows that it is hovering on the edge of political insignificance.

DIE RECHTE organised numerous solidarity events for Haverbeck-Wetzel, whom they treat as a heroine, calling her a “political prisoner”, a “dissident” and a “fighter for free speech”. On 9 November 2019, the party’s North Rhine-Westphalia regional association and its Westphalia-Lippe local association held a solidarity demonstration in Bielefeld (North Rhine-Westphalia) with the motto “Freedom for Ursula Haverbeck!” to mark her 91st birthday. The event was attended by around 230 people. This unlimited solidarity with the jailed Holocaust denier is another reflection of flagrant antisemitism and the party’s fundamental rejection of the values of the Basic Law.

The small right-wing extremist party **Der III. Weg** (The Third Way) successfully expanded its structures in 2019, if only to a limited extent. It now has 20 regional “bases” (2018: 18) and around 580 members (2018: 530). To date, the party has not managed to expand beyond the three regional associations for central, southern and western Germany it established in 2016.

The party leadership focused its efforts on election campaign events in the lead-up to the European and local elections on 26 May 2019, although Der III. Weg achieved absolutely no relevance in the European parliamentary elections, polling 0.0% (12,756 votes in total).

The party’s regional bases carried out regular “National Patrols” in 2019, to imply that it would give the people of Germany back their “lost sense of security” and that its presence would provide protection against supposedly criminal foreigners. Der III. Weg wants to use these “National Patrols” to style itself the “troubleshooter party” and emphasise its supposed connection to mainstream society. The strategy represents a return to the party’s anti-asylum campaigns in past years with the aim of gaining publicity.

In 2019 it again organised campaigns such as its “German Winter Aid” and “German food bank” campaigns in which it collected clothing and

distributed food to those in need provided that they were ethnically German, which is another issue the party focuses on.

In January 2019, following careful examination, the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV) declared **Der Flügel** (German for “the wing”) and the **Junge Alternative für Deutschland** (JA, Young Alternative) official intelligence targets considered suspected threats (*Verdachtsfälle*). Both are part of Alternative für Deutschland (AfD, Alternative for Germany), which is not an official intelligence target for the BfV.

Der Flügel considers itself a coalition movement and community of interests of individuals within the AfD with the explicit aim of using the AfD to achieve “fundamental political change within Germany” and, from a fundamentalist oppositional perspective, to provide “a real alternative to the existing parties”. Various statements by AfD and Der Flügel functionaries lead to the conclusion that at least 20% of AfD members throughout Germany are part of the movement. This means that a minimum of 7,000 members can be assumed.

The political concept promoted by Der Flügel is based on exclusion, contempt and ultimately the broad denial of the rights of immigrants, Muslims and anyone who does not share its political views. It directly contradicts the guarantee of human dignity and the principle of democracy and the rule of law. The political beliefs of Der Flügel are based on the notion of an ethnically pure race. Der Flügel functionaries are of the view that the survival of the (biologically defined) race is under threat because of the current government. Their discourse therefore warns repeatedly against the supposedly imminent “elimination” and “dissolution” of Germany.

The attitude of Der Flügel to the Third Reich is based on a revisionist approach that relativises Nazi crimes or erases them from history altogether. The aim in doing so is to achieve a “180-degree turnaround in the policy of memory” that will enable a vision of history to be disseminated that is unencumbered by the Nazi legacy and forges a shared identity.

The JA was founded in 2013 and is the official youth branch of the AfD. According to its own figures, it had 1,600 members in 2019.

JA ideology is based on an ethnic and cultural definition of the German nation which goes against the broad interpretation of the German people as set out in the Basic Law. The youth organisation is also hostile towards Islam and Muslims and expresses this in aggressive rhetoric. The organisation's discourse also indicates that its aims are directed against democracy and the rule of law.

The JA itself reacted to its classification as a suspected threat (*Verdachtsfall*) by creating an "Office for the Protection of the Constitution task force" and presenting its findings and the consequences for the youth organisation at a press conference in June 2019. The result included the deletion of some points in the organisation's plan for Germany which had been cited by the BfV as indications of anti-constitutional activity. The organisation also said it expelled 25 to 30 members who did not agree with this reform process.

It is not yet possible to judge whether the changes to the political programme will also be backed up by a change in the actual direction of the JA or whether these are simply a tactical response to the BfV's surveillance but do not have real substance. The sometimes close ties to Der Flügel and the ongoing links to the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (IDB, Identitarian Movement Germany) point to a purely cosmetic exercise.

Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter

The category of “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” (literally “citizens of the Reich” and “sovereign citizens”) spans a broad range of individuals and organisations, small to very small groupings, groups active across state borders, and virtual networks, often with very different ideologies.

What they all have in common is their fundamental rejection of the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Germany and its legal order. “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” are characterised across the board by hostility to the state and a belief in conspiracy theories. These conspiracy theories promote antisemitism. As a result, “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” frequently express antisemitic attitudes and make antisemitic statements.

It is often very difficult to distinguish between “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter”. The former refer to the continued existence of some kind of “German Reich” and reject the Federal Republic of Germany; “Selbstverwalter” feel that they do not belong to the state and are not bound by its legal order. They declare their “secession” from the state and assert that they are “sovereign citizens”.

The broad ideological spectrum of “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” means they have large numbers of sympathisers. In 2019, the scene was thought to comprise about 19,000 persons nationwide (2018: 19,000). About 950 of them can be considered right-wing extremists (2018: 950).

A large swathe of “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” concentrate on confrontation with government agencies and offices, as they consider government intervention in general to be unjustified. This can take the form of sending large numbers of long letters, often containing pseudo-legal arguments, but can also go as far as significant aggression, provoking threatening situations.

This potential for violence became actual violence in September of the reporting year. During executive measures against a member of the movement in Ottendorf-Okrilla (Saxony), the person resisted forcibly. As soon as the police entered the property, he got into his vehicle and drove at speed into the police vehicle that was parked in front of the property. During his subsequent arrest, he attacked the police officers, who used pepper spray to quell the attack.

“Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” have a strong affinity for weapons, which makes them a significant potential threat. Since surveillance of the movement began in 2016, at least 790 “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” have had their weapons permits revoked. As at 31 December 2019, around 530 “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” were known to still have weapons permits (2018: 910).

In 2019, enforcement measures involving “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” again resulted in large numbers of weapons being found, evidence of the ongoing interest in weapons within the scene. On 14 and 15 March 2019, for example, police searches carried out in Kordel (Rhineland-Palatinate) revealed several hundred weapons, weapons components, ammunition and explosives. The two individuals in question had been banned from possessing firearms in late 2018.

The unsophisticated world view of many “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter”, shaped by conspiracy theories, a rejection of the state and including antisemitic, racist, and historically and territorially revisionist attitudes, means that executive measures against them are of limited effectiveness. In some cases, temporary restraint can be seen in the actions of the individual in question, but this seldom leads to them opting out of the movement in the long term.

The ongoing high levels of verbal aggression and the potential threat they pose therefore require ongoing intensive monitoring by the domestic intelligence agencies.

Left-wing extremism

The number of **left-wing extremist sympathisers** (after subtracting multiple memberships) rose by around 4.7% to a total of 33,500 in 2019 (2018: 32,000).

The number of **violence-oriented left-wing extremists** rose by around 2.2% to 9,200 (2018: 9,000). More than one in four of all left-wing extremists can thus be classed as violence-oriented.

Left-wing extremist following ¹		
	2018	2019
Violence-oriented left-wing extremists²	9,000	9,200
including:		
Autonomists	7,400	7,400
Anarchists	800	900
Strictly ideological left-wing extremists	800	900
Non-violent strictly ideological left-wing extremists and other left-wing extremists	24,000	25,300
Total	33,000	34,500
After subtracting multiple memberships	32,000	33,500
<p>1 Some of these figures are estimated and rounded off. 2 Up to 2017, only the total number of violence-oriented left-wing extremists was listed in this table. For better clarity, from 2018 the number of violence-oriented left-wing extremists will be broken down and the number of violence-oriented strictly ideological left-wing extremists listed separately.</p>		

The number of **criminal offences motivated by left-wing extremism** increased sharply in 2019. While 4,622 offences were recorded in 2018, this figure increased by almost 40% to 6,449 in the reporting year. In particular, there was a clear increase of 58.6% in criminal damage, bringing the figure to 3,520 offences (2018: 2,219). The number of arson attacks rose by 51.9% to 164 (2018: 108). Although the number of **violent offences** fell by almost 10% to 921 (2018: 1,010), this figure includes two cases of attempted homicide (2018: no cases). Cases of bodily injury remained roughly constant, at 355 (2018: 363). Left-wing extremist criminal and violent offences left numerous people injured and caused damage to property amounting to hundreds of millions of euro in Germany in 2019.

Figures for left-wing extremism show a **continuing high threat level** both in terms of criminal and violent offenders, and sympathisers. As well as a quantitative change in the amount of violence, we can also see a difference in the type and level of violence. While riots and “black blocs” are becoming less predominant at demonstrations, systematic actions against people and property are visible on the sidelines of these events. Small, well-organised groups launch direct, extremely violent attacks on political opponents or perceived opponents under the auspices of “anti-fascism” in order to create “Nazi-free zones”. The notions of “anti-gentrification” and “anti-repression” are also used to justify direct physical attacks on police officers, politicians and businesspeople. Moreover, clandestine arson attacks against targets such as vehicles, construction equipment and buildings lead to losses, in some cases huge. The erosion of the general consensus among left-wing extremists to reject targeted violence against people increased considerably again in 2019. Autonomists in particular were responsible for a large number of serious violent crimes in the reporting year. Violent criminals from the autonomist movement showed few inhibitions in direct confrontations with political opponents or, indeed, with the police. They tacitly accepted serious bodily harm and in some cases also the possible death of other people. Targeted violence against others was used in particular in the fight for “autonomous free spaces”. The situation escalated when an employee of a property development company in Leipzig (Saxony) was attacked in her own flat by left-wing extremists, who punched her repeatedly in the face.

Within the spectrum of violent left-wing extremism, the action area of “anti-repression” has proved the strongest impetus for violence nationwide. Left-wing extremists used executive measures by the state as an excuse for nationwide militant action again in 2019. Letters claiming responsibility regularly cited a reaction against alleged police violence or a demonstration of solidarity for imprisoned members of the scene as the reason for such action. In contrast to the other fields of action, “anti-repression” is not well suited to mobilising large numbers of civil-society actors and generating loyalty in the long term.

Left-wing extremists continue to exploit democratic discourse to their own ends. They take up important current political topics in an attempt to exert a targeted influence on societal discussions. Their aim is to ensure that their own political agenda, such as questioning the legitimacy of the state and its institutions, features in political debate. Some examples of this are the attempts to influence the climate protest movement and the protests against rent increases.

By participating in events organised by the climate protest movement, post-autonomist and strictly ideological left-wing extremists tried to radicalise other participants, make personal contact with non-extremist participants and attract new members to the movement. Left-wing extremists see protests against rent increases and luxury housing modernisation in urban areas as particularly useful for recruiting new members. The autonomist spectrum takes advantage of short-term developments to decide whether to focus their militant action on a particular topic. In 2019, alleged “antisocial urban structures” and the topic of “anti-gentrification” were regularly cited as justification for criminal and violent offences. These ranged from damage to property through arson to targeted attacks on individuals. The “anti-gentrification” rationale demonstrated the increasing radicalisation of the left-wing extremist scene in 2019.

In regard to “anti-fascism”, members of right-wing extremist parties or groups as well as the AfD political party, which is branded generally right-wing extremist by left-wing extremists, were targets of left-wing extremist action. There were repeated crimes, some serious, against AfD members and property. These included damage to event premises and party offices and arson attacks on vehicles. There were also repeated crimes of bodily injuries against people considered by left-wing extremists to be part of the right-wing extremist spectrum.

Autonomists are the largest group among violence-oriented left-wing extremists by a considerable margin. Their rejection of all forms of external control translates into an aversion to concrete organisational structures. Most autonomists favour informal structures and create small groups based on personal relationships (“reference groups”). These small groups in turn have loose relationships with other small groups with which they co-operate as the circumstances require. Autonomists also

co-operate with non-extremist actors and alliances when it is convenient to them, with the specific aim of expanding the demands of such groups to include extremist content and bringing a militant component to the groups.

Post-autonomists take this strategy further, focusing their political activities on networking with non-extremist groups and actors. Representatives of such groups are the Interventionistische Linke (IL, **Interventionalist Left**) and the communist **...ums Ganze! Bündnis** (uG, ...all or nothing alliance).

Autonomist scenes form first and foremost in major cities and in university towns. The largest scenes are in Berlin, Hamburg and Leipzig. Not only do these groups have above-average levels of activity and mobilisation potential, but they also commit large numbers of criminal offences and violent crimes.

Members of the **anarchist** movement reject the subjugation of human beings by other human beings. This includes all forms of state rule, including those within liberal democracies. The anarchist scene is characterised by high levels of networking, considered essential for achieving the revolution that will bring about an anarchist society.

Strictly ideological left-wing extremists base their ideology and politics principally on the theories of early communist thinkers such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. A common element is their central goal of establishing a socialist system, which would then serve as the foundation for a “classless” communist society. The 900 violence-oriented strictly ideological left-wing extremists currently in Germany, including most notably the Trotskyist **Gruppe ArbeiterInnenmacht** (GAM, Workers’ Power), its youth organisation **REVOLUTION** (REVO) and the **Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterjugend** (SDAJ, Socialist German Workers Youth), explicitly do not rule out the use of violence.

The vast majority of strictly ideological left-wing extremists is not classed as violence-oriented. The approximately 2,850 members of the orthodox communist **Deutsche Kommunistische Partei** (DKP, Communist Party of Germany) remain true to their goal of achieving socialism and communism. The **Marxistisch-Leninistische Partei Deutschlands**

(MLPD, Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany) follows a strictly Maoist-Stalinist ideology. Its goal is to found a society based on “true socialism” as a stepping-stone to a “classless” communist society. Its **youth association REBELL** in particular used the climate protests as an opportunity to make contact with and recruit young people. REBELL even held recruitment campaigns outside of schools. The Trotskyist-leaning **Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei** (SGP, Socialist Equality Party) follows the Trotskyist theory of a socialist revolution as an ongoing global process led by workers’ associations.

With some 10,500 members and around 50 local groups throughout Germany, **Rote Hilfe e.V.** (RH, Red Aid) is one of the largest and most important groupings of left-wing extremists in Germany. Its member numbers have increased sharply in the last three years. 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. Based on its ideology and strategy, the organisation works to maintain a nationwide network and ensures broad cohesion among the different currents within the movement, providing legitimacy for its members to commit criminal and violent offences. Red Aid regularly stepped up its publicity work following measures by the state. Its aim was to try and influence the interpretation of events, emphasising the alleged “repressive nature” of the democratic state.

Left-wing extremists aim to obtain as much publicity as possible with their actions. After linksunten.indymedia was banned in August 2017, the **website de.indymedia** became the most important information and propaganda channel for the left-wing extremist movement in the German-speaking area. Letters claiming responsibility for in some cases serious criminal and violent offences are published regularly on the site, alongside calls to commit further offences. Left-wing extremists repeatedly carry out “doxing” campaigns on de.indymedia, publishing photos and personal information of “unpopular persons”. These are often accompanied by more or less open calls to commit crimes. Those posts on de.indymedia which are not removed immediately by the “admin

collectives” show a clear anti-constitutional stance in their overall content. Given these facts, there is sufficient evidence of left-wing extremist activities to justify the surveillance of de.indymedia by the BfV as a suspected threat (*Verdachtsfall*).

Islamist extremism / Islamist terrorism

Considering the hard numbers, one can say that the Islamist extremist following increased by around 5% to a total of 28,020 individuals in 2019 (2018: 26,560).

Following in the field of Islamist extremism / Islamist terrorism ¹		
Organisations	2018	2019
Salafist Movements	11,300	12,150
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Al-Qaeda Core Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQM) Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Al-Shabab Hai'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)	no hard numbers	no hard numbers
Hezbollah ²	1,050	1,050
Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (HAMAS) ²	320	380
Turkish Hezbollah (TH)	400	400
Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT)	350	430
Muslim Brotherhood (MB) / Deutsche Muslimische Gemeinschaft e.V. (DMG, German Muslim Community regd. assoc.) ³	1,040	1,350
Tablighi Jama'at (TJ)	650	650
Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg e.V. (IZH, Hamburg Islamic Centre regd. assoc.)	no hard numbers	no hard numbers
Millî Görüş movement and affiliated associations (IGMG)	10,000	10,000
Furkan Gemeinschaft	290	350
Hezb-e Islami-ye Afghanistan (HIA)	no hard numbers	100
Others ⁴	1,160	1,160

1 Figures refer to Germany; they are partly estimated and rounded off.
2 Hezbollah and HAMAS are considered terrorist on an international level, but so far Germany has mainly served as a safe haven to them.
3 Before it was renamed in September 2018, the name of this association was Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland e.V. (IGD, Islamic Community in Germany regd. assoc.).
4 Other organisations whose membership figures and figures of followers are to be taken into account as regards the Islamist extremist following.

The threat situation in Germany in 2019 was largely determined by the same structures and influences as in the previous years. The **threat posed by Islamist terrorism remained at high levels**, although the number of attacks and of detected attack plans in Germany and Europe in principle shows a downward trend. The situation in the violence-prone Salafist spectrum, in particular, was marked by a seeming shift from clear-cut threat scenarios towards a vague and unclear threat situation.

Despite the fact that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) lost its last territorial base in 2019 and that al-Qaeda has not gained any fresh impetus either, the lasting relevance of the jihadist ideology manifested itself in the surviving structures, in the still existing following, and in the intense online propaganda.

Jihadist organisations still consider Germany an enemy, with the latter remaining one of their targets. Nonetheless, there has been no Islamist terrorist attack in Germany since August 2017. This probably is a consequence of the military defeat ISIL suffered in Syria, but also of the comprehensive measures taken by the security agencies.

All the same, thwarted attack plans are proof of the persisting potential threat. This is particularly true for the threat emanating from lone-perpetrator attacks inspired by terrorist organisations, which are hard to detect in advance. Even lone perpetrators, however, do not act with no one else involved at all. When planning and preparing an attack, perpetrators usually receive support and advice from members of a terrorist organisation abroad. It still cannot be ruled out that it might come to complex attacks planned well in advance.

Again in 2019, a **large number of antisemitic incidents motivated by Islamist extremism** occurred. These incidents ranged from antisemitic speeches and sermons to anti-Jewish postings on social media and verbal or physical attacks on Jewish individuals. Antisemitism serves as an ideological link connecting all Islamist extremist movements. The vast majority of the Islamist extremist organisations operating in Germany holds antisemitic ideas, which they disseminate using various channels.

With the fall of its last enclave al-Baghuz in East Syria in March 2019, ISIL's territorial control of the region of Syria/Iraq came to an end. Moreover, the ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was killed during a US

military operation in the North West of Syria in October 2019. Nevertheless, **the jihadist ideology propagated by ISIL and a major part of the organisation's following continue to exist**. After its complete military defeat in Syria and Iraq, ISIL has changed from a state-like actor back into a terrorist group operating underground. The organisation continues to pursue a strategy of terror particularly aiming at “soft” targets.

Al-Qaeda has also been under pressure—both from ongoing state prosecution and from the continuous rivalry with ISIL, which al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups have not gained any advantage from so far.

The fact that al-Qaeda core still strives to occupy a leading role within the global jihadist scene and among the many regional branches that continue to operate can be seen not least from the video published by the al-Qaeda leader Aiman al-Zawahiri on the occasion of the 18th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. The half-hour video, in which he calls upon his audience to stage attacks worldwide, shows a clear threat potential that is expressed even more urgently than in previous years. Nonetheless, al-Qaeda's propaganda skills still do not come up to those of ISIL in any way.

Both organisations endeavour to take every opportunity to stage terrorist acts of violence. They try to encourage (self-)radicalised individuals or (micro-)groups acting autonomously to independently plan and stage such terrorist attacks.

As a result of the end of the “caliphate” in Syria, jihadist fighters and their families have left the region or intend to do so, including individuals who originally came from Germany. Many are currently staying in prisons or camps in the areas controlled by Kurds. Some of them tried to reach the areas in the Idlib region controlled by groups close to al-Qaeda.

In October 2019, Turkey launched a military offensive in the areas controlled by Kurds in the border region of Northern Syria. Having ended in an armistice after a few days, the offensive also affects the jihadist fighters staying in the border region.

There is an ongoing risk that individuals holding German citizenship or having other links to Germany, who are imprisoned or in custody in a Kurdish area, will manage to flee or go into hiding in connection with the

conflicts between Turks and Kurds. There currently is no telling in what way the changed situation after the Turkish military offensive and its consequences will influence the movements of ISIL sympathisers to Europe and the associated security situation in Germany.

Since 2012, BfV has learned of more than 1,050 individuals having left Germany for Syria or Iraq with an Islamist extremist motivation. More than a quarter of them are women. There were hardly any departures for Syria or Iraq in 2019, and further departures are to be expected only occasionally. Likewise, no new theatres of jihad are currently in sight.

Approximately one third of all individuals having departed has returned to Germany by now. While a “wave of returns” does not seem to be emerging, it cannot be ruled out that the number of returns will increase in future.

No general statement can be given on the behaviour of returnees in Germany. The security agencies have to look at each individual case because a returnee’s behaviour is strongly influenced by their personal environment, their family ties and their remaining social structures. This is especially true for individuals who are thought to have stayed in the last enclave of the ISIL “caliphate” until the end.

The **Salafist following continues to grow**, although not as rapidly as in the period from 2012 to 2016. In the reporting year, it rose by 850 individuals, reaching 12,150 individuals (date of information: 31 December 2019). Since its first recording in 2011, the number of Salafist followers has thus more than tripled.

The Salafist scene in Germany is going through what could be called a “consolidation stage”. There are no generally accepted leaders (any more) who operate throughout Germany who promote identification and define a line of approach; the scene has undergone fragmentation. A few well-connected individuals exert influence on a local or regional level only. In public, the scene is rather keeping a low profile at present.

The events of the past few years have changed the Salafist scene not only structurally. Both the downfall of the ISIL “caliphate” and the bans on various Salafist associations have pushed the idea of creating a sense of community into the background. The fragmentation of the scene thus contributes to an increasing variety of currents within the Salafist jihadist

spectrum. They range from a political Salafism—which ostensibly focuses on proselytising and can attract people from other Islamist extremist groups or even from beyond the extremist sphere—to individuals with a strong affinity for violence on a sometimes rudimentary ideological basis. The potential threat emanating from Salafism remains significant.

The continued attraction of the ideology is particularly reflected in the jihadist online propaganda spread by ISIL and al-Qaeda, which is still dominated by the conflict in Syria and Iraq. In 2019, the jihadist propaganda continued to call for staging attacks in Western countries, although less frequently than in the year before.

ISIL’s propaganda is predominant in the jihadist Internet scene even after the loss of their “caliphate”. A part of the official propaganda is translated by specialised pro-ISIL media agencies to make the content accessible to followers who do not speak Arabic (including the German-speaking audience).

For the first time since 2014, the ISIL leader al-Baghdadi posted a video in April 2019, commenting among other things on the fall of the organisation’s last bastion al-Baghuz. This video met with a very positive response from German ISIL supporters. In September 2019, another statement by al-Baghdadi caused worldwide demonstrations of sympathy for ISIL among its supporters.

After al-Baghdadi and his spokesman were killed in October 2019, the first statement given by the new spokesman regarding ISIL’s new “caliph”, who was introduced under the alias of Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, also gained widespread acceptance and approval from the organisation’s followers. Al-Baghdadi’s death could thus be used to gather new impetus for their propaganda.

By contrast, despite its clearly threatening tone, the above-mentioned audio message of 11 September 2019 by the al-Qaeda leader al-Zawahiri received only a muted response from among the German-speaking scene. This reaction to the yearly message also suggests that al-Qaeda’s leadership is still not in a position to create a fresh momentum.

However, German-speaking online actors sympathising with al-Qaeda’s ideology continue to call for going to Syria and supporting jihad.

In late November 2019, state measures co-ordinated by the European

police agency Europol resulted in the deletion of a large number of jihadist websites as well as channels and groups on various messenger services. This operation also affected channels and groups on the messenger service Telegram, which the German-speaking scene of supporters had used the most until then. In addition to disseminating propaganda, the scene also uses such messenger services to stay connected. The individuals concerned have not established a similar alternative communication structure so far.

The Islamist extremist scene in Germany is strongly marked by the Salafist and jihadist following. Still, other Islamist extremist movements, some of which have a large number of followers, also play an important role. These include the various branches of Islamist extremist organisations that use Germany as a safe haven for their Islamist terrorist activities abroad as well as those organisations that endeavour to achieve their anti-constitutional aims using legalist means. The Lebanese Hezbollah with its terrorist acts against Israel and Israeli interests, for instance, operates outside the Middle East too. Germany mainly serves as a safe haven, though.

Legalist organisations such as the Deutsche Muslimische Gemeinschaft e.V. (DMG, German Muslim Community), which is considered to be affiliated with the extremist Muslim Brotherhood (MB), strive to change society in the long run. In accordance with its long-term strategy, the MB seeks to permeate society and to ultimately establish a social and political system based on the Sharia. The Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg e.V. (IZH, Islamic Center Hamburg) and the Furkan Gemeinschaft (Furkan Community) also belong to the legalist spectrum.

Extremist efforts of foreigners posing a threat to security (excluding Islamist extremism)

In 2019, the following in the field of organisations of foreigners posing a threat to security other than Islamist extremist organisations fell to a total of 28,820 individuals (2018: 30,350). This drop is exclusively explained by the reduced number of non-Turkish separatists. As before, the largest organisation in Germany in terms of numbers is the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) counting 14,500 followers (2018: 14,500).

Following of extremist organisations of foreigners¹ (excluding Islamist extremism)		
	2018	2019
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 ²	2,300	770
Total	30,350	28,820

1 Figures refer to Germany; they are partly estimated and rounded off. They also include the following of banned groups.
2 Comprises the Germany-based followers of other worldwide unstructured groupings that are extremist and/or pose a threat to security. This includes 150 followers of organisations with a connection to other countries for which there is sufficiently substantial evidence of extremist endeavours posing a threat to security, which is why BfV has placed the respective groups under full surveillance as a suspected threat (*Verdachtsfall*).

PKK, the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party–Front (DHKP-C), and the right-wing extremist Ülkücü movement (“Idealists” movement) continue to be of particular relevance to Germany's internal security: PKK because of its violent actions undertaken in its home region, DHKP-C for its overt commitment to armed struggle in Turkey, and the Ülkücü movement due to its militant denial of the principle of equality.

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-strategical guidelines by the organisations in their respective home countries, and they are ready to consistently implement them.

In 2019, **PKK** had around 14,500 followers in Germany (2018: 14,500). Its activities in the reporting year were mainly shaped by the Turkish military offensive “Peace Spring” in Northern Syria launched in October 2019, by the Europe-wide actions aimed at improving the situation of the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, and by the domestic situation in Turkey. The acknowledgement of the Kurdish identity as well as a political and cultural autonomy for the Kurds while respecting national borders within their Turkish but also their Syrian settlement areas remain PKK’s key requirements.

The hostilities between the Turkish Armed Forces and PKK’s guerrilla units in the South-East Anatolian areas, which are mainly inhabited by Kurds, continued in the period under review. Before the start of the Turkish military offensive in October 2019, a rapprochement between PKK and the Turkish government had not seemed completely impossible. Applications filed by Öcalan’s lawyers for a visit to their client, for example, were accepted for the first time in eight years in May 2019. Until August 2019, Öcalan was allowed to receive at least three more visits from his lawyers and two visits from family members.

After three Kurdish mayors of provincial capitals in the South East of Turkey had been removed from their offices on 19 August 2019, and after the “Peace Spring” offensive had begun on 9 October 2019, the days following each event saw many protests against the Turkish government in German and other European cities, which were also attended by PKK followers. Moreover, the Turkish military offensive in Northern Syria has further increased PKK’s efforts to indoctrinate especially young followers in Germany and to recruit them for the armed struggle.

The young people belonging to the PKK youth organisation Komalên Ciwan/Tevgera Ciwanên Şoreşger (TCS) are important for the recruitment for the armed struggle or for militant actions or criminal offences against Turkish state institutions or Turkish right-wing extremists. The developments in the Kurdish settlement areas observed in the period under review resulted in spontaneous rallies and in criminal offences committed by the youth organisation such as damages to property or graffiti. During or after demonstrations against the Turkish military operation, there also were repeated violent clashes between young PKK

followers and presumably nationalist Turks, usually due to previous mutual provocations.

The “Demokratisches Gesellschaftszentrum der KurdInnen in Deutschland e.V.” (NAV-DEM, Democratic Social Centre of Kurds in Germany) served as the umbrella organisation of pro-PKK associations in Germany for a long time. In early May 2019, PKK intensified the restructuring of its segments that were not expressly affected by the ban on its activities, founding a new umbrella organisation for Germany. The Konföderation der Gemeinschaften Kurdistans in Deutschland e.V. (KON-MED, Confederation of Kurdistan Communities in Germany) is said to comprise five regional federations, which in turn preside over the local associations. The newly created structures are expected to gradually grow so that they will be able to perform their new tasks to the full extent.

DHKP-C still strives to establish a socialist order in Turkey using the means of the armed struggle. However, it did not carry out any significant militant or terrorist activities in Turkey in 2019. The primary reason for this probably is the security situation in Turkey, which has been critical since the attempted military coup of 2016. In this connection, DHKP-C was subject to arrests and searches by the Turkish security agencies during the period under review.

In Germany, DHKP-C has been banned since 1998. It has been listed as a terrorist organisation since 2002 by the European Union and since 1997 by the USA. Although DHKP-C’s ideology shows a clear commitment to the armed struggle in Turkey, the organisation did not manage to successfully implement it during the period under review.

Even though the terrorist activities undertaken by DHKP-C in Turkey have been decreasing over the last years, it is an undisputable fact that the organisation will continue to seize every opportunity to use violence mainly against Turkish and US institutions. The “successful” implementation and the extent of the damage are only of secondary importance in this context. The organisation even uses attempted attacks for propaganda purposes, claiming that they are proof of its capacity for action.

Germany remains indispensable to DHKP-C as an area of retreat backing the armed struggle in Turkey. The organisation particularly undertakes

various propaganda activities in our country. A central focus was and is on the performances of the music band Grup Yorum, which is affiliated with DHKP-C. Their concerts currently are DHKP-C's most important propaganda tool because the band evokes interest well beyond the organisation's own followers. Besides several smaller concerts, Grup Yorum also gave a larger one in Ludwigshafen (Rhineland-Palatinate) on 1 June 2019, drawing an audience of around 1,000. Another concert planned to be staged in Cologne (North Rhine-Westphalia) on 24 November 2019 was prohibited by the police based on the reasoning that Grup Yorum, as an integral part of DHKP-C, is also affected by the ban imposed on the latter in Germany.

The Turkish right-wing extremist **Ülkücü** ideology is mainly represented in Germany by the two umbrella organisations Föderation der Türkisch-Demokratischen Idealistenvereine in Deutschland e.V. (ADÜTDF) and ATİB – Union der Türkisch Islamischen Kulturvereine in Europa e.V. (ATİB). In addition, there are several other structures and non-organised followers. While the umbrella organisations try to outwardly appear as law-abiding, non-organised followers of the Ülkücü movement spread their racist ideas of superiority, in particular via the Internet.

The sign and most important symbol of recognition of the Ülkücü movement are the “grey wolf” (Bozkurt) and the salutation derived from it, where the fingers of the right hand with outstretched arm form a wolf's head. Consequently, the followers of the Ülkücü movement are often called “Grey Wolves” (Bozkurtlar).

According to what they consider an overall positive political development in Turkey, the organised followers of the Ülkücü movement decided not to carry out any actions relating to the political situation in Turkey using their own organisations' names. Instead, their organisations publicly called upon their followers to refrain from violence and to keep a low profile. Occasional acts of violence between the political camps, which especially occurred on the margins of PKK demonstrations, were triggered by the situation, namely by an emotionally charged atmosphere and mutual provocations.

In contrast to the numerous protest rallies against the latest Turkish military offensive in Northern Syria in autumn 2019, rallies of solidarity

with Turkey took place to a far lesser extent. Turkish right-wing extremists were among the participants and sometimes revealed themselves by using symbols of the Ülkücü movement.

Clashes between rival extremist groups from Turkey, particularly in the context of demonstrations, continue to pose a threat to Germany's internal security. Spontaneous violent encounters triggered by the situation may occur at any time, especially with the involvement of young PKK followers and of Turkish right-wing extremists not organised in an association.

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

Foreign powers use all means of covert activities available to them to pursue their interests against the Federal Republic of Germany. The threat situation can be considered dynamic and complex.

Due to its membership of NATO and the EU and also to its status as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, a post which is limited to two years, Germany is a target for political espionage. Its economic strength, innovative businesses and its achievements in applied research and basic research mean Germany is also a target for industrial and technological espionage carried out by foreign intelligence services. Cases of state-sponsored terrorism in which foreign intelligence services or structures controlled by foreign states play a central role constitute an additional threat. The same applies to potential operations in preparation for sabotage, particularly of critical infrastructures².

Espionage can have a wide range of negative effects, including influencing the democratic process, leaking confidential diplomatic negotiating positions in advance and violating the law. Foreign intelligence services investigating and infiltrating opposition groups from non-EU countries in Germany is another way of interfering with national sovereignty. The loss of know-how and industrial and economic damage are also vast.³

Germany's reconnaissance and counter-intelligence efforts are directed against all illegal intelligence activities. In the framework of this "360° processing" it is possible that evidence will emerge pointing at activities in Germany on behalf of intelligence services with which BfV has a trusting co-operation based on partnership in other contexts. But even in these cases, foreign intelligence services using telecommunications surveillance or human sources to engage in espionage in or against Germany cannot be tolerated.

2 Organisations and institutions of special importance for the country and its people where failure or functional impairment would lead to severe supply bottlenecks, significant disturbance of public order or other potentially dramatic consequences, for example energy and telecommunications companies or power plant controls.

3 Based on its regular survey, the Federal Association for Information Technology, Communication and New Media (Bitkom) estimated total damages for 2018/2019 to be 102.9 billion euro, almost twice as much as in the previous study in 2017. The results of the study "Economic security in the digital world" are available at www.bitkom.org.

The Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey remain the main countries engaged in espionage activities and trying to exert influence on Germany.

The ongoing digital transformation and the increasingly networked nature of our society increases the potential for cyber attacks, worsening the threat of cyber espionage and cyber sabotage.

The intelligence services of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China in particular carry out cyber espionage activities against German agencies. One of their tasks is to boost their own economies with the help of information gathered by the intelligence services. This type of information-gathering campaign severely threatens the success and development opportunities of German companies.

To counteract this threat, Germany has a comprehensive cyber security architecture in place, which is operated by a number of different authorities. The BfV plays a major role in investigating and defending against cyber threats by detecting attacks, attributing them to specific attackers, and using the knowledge gained from this to draw up prevention strategies. The National Cyber Response Centre, in which the BfV plays a key role, was set up to consolidate the co-operation between the competent agencies. The National Cyber Response Centre aims to optimise the exchange of information between state agencies and to improve the co-ordination of protective and defensive measures against potential IT incidents.

Russia's intelligence-gathering activities focus on all fields of German policy that may affect Russia, in particular foreign affairs and economic policy. The Kremlin also continues to try and exert influence through a range of channels. Russia's geopolitical ambitions drive it to continue objecting to the sanctions agreed by the EU in response to the annexing of Crimea and the incursion into Ukraine in 2014.

There is sufficient objective evidence to suspect that the Russian Federation could have ordered the assassination of a Georgian national killed in Berlin on 23 August 2019. This, coupled with Russia's inadequate co-operation in the investigation, is having an additional negative impact on German-Russian relations.

Russian espionage activities abroad have increased in response to the worsening of that country's political relations with the Western world. As regards German home affairs policy, the Russian intelligence services try to gather information on party-political structures and developments, on the views of individual political parties and on the potential impact of electoral outcomes at all levels. They also try and obtain advance information on German energy policy decisions, which are of considerable importance to Russia as a major fossil fuel exporter.

Apart from its espionage interests, Russia strives to influence political and public opinion in Germany to be more positive towards Russian policy. Russian agencies use propaganda and exert influence with a view to shaping the opinion of and spreading misinformation among a range of target groups. The most important role in this is played by the Internet channel RT Deutsch, the Sputnik news agency, social networks and state or private institutes ("think tanks"). In comparison with previous years, these activities have decreased somewhat in relation to Germany.

The intelligence services of the Russian Federation make extensive use of cyber attacks to gain information. Information gained in this way is in some cases then used to spread misinformation and propaganda. The targets of these attacks include government entities, parliaments and politicians, the military, supranational organisations, international businesses, and scientific and research institutions. Journalists, NGOs, major international banks and media companies, and anyone who criticises the government are also targeted, with the ongoing use of attack methods that are difficult to investigate.

The scope of discernible political and economic espionage by **China** has increased considerably, without a reduction in information-gathering on military intelligence targets. China's need for information about supranational entities such as the EU and about international conferences such as the G20 summit is constantly increasing. In addition, both policy and economic positions affecting China (such as the inclusion of Chinese companies in 5G buildout, conflict in technology policy or the trade war with the USA) are extremely interesting to the country and are essential to making strategic decisions. Intelligence targets continue to be business and industry, research and technology. The same applies to the popular

movements which the Chinese authorities call the “Five Poisons”, fearing that they threaten national unity and the Communist Party’s monopoly on power.⁴

China continues to buy up medium-sized German companies in the high-tech sector in order to close gaps in technology and carry out its ambitious high-tech programme “Made in China 2025” (MIC 2025)⁵. As in 2018, the reporting year saw a quantitative reduction in Chinese investment. However, this does not say anything about the quality of individual takeovers. In addition, further targeted company takeovers in key technology areas can be expected, as China’s investment strategies are long term.

In addition, Chinese actors are increasingly attempting to exert political influence abroad. The confrontations with the democracy movement in Hong Kong provided an opportunity for that. For the project to succeed, it is necessary to ensure a favourable political environment, so the Chinese government is engaged in massive attempts to extend Beijing’s global influence on politics, business, research and society. Governmental, semi-governmental and private actors use well-connected German decision-makers and multipliers to lobby on behalf of Chinese interests. Chinese investment in Germany also creates economic dependencies that China can use as leverage to gain political concessions if necessary.

In the past, attacks on political targets by presumably Chinese hackers were mainly seen in Asia. Since 2018, there appears to have been an increasing focus on government entities in European or Western countries. Supranational entities with which China co-operates or competes on a political and geostrategic level, and government institutions which were and are in negotiations for political co-operation with China as part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)⁶ are among the bodies particularly affected by this. The presumed actors include, for example, groupings such as APT 27, also known as Emissary Panda, which has attacked numerous government institution with the HYPERBRO and

4 The movements which Chinese authorities call the “Five Poisons” include the independence movements of the Uighur and Tibetan ethnic minorities, the anti-regime Falun Gong movement, the democracy movement and proponents of sovereignty for the island of Taiwan. Supporters of the democracy movement in Hong Kong have been added to the list based on developments since summer 2019.

5 The Chinese government’s central industrial policy strategy, aiming for global market leadership in ten selected industries.

6 An investment programme presented by the country and party leaders in 2013 (also called the New Silk Road initiative) which encompasses global Chinese infrastructure investment.

FOCUSFJORD malware, which it developed itself. This particularly affected those countries that have been in negotiations with Beijing regarding infrastructure development as part of BRI. Further actors which the BfV attributes to China include WinNTI, APT 15, APT 25 and APT 31, which in some cases have also attacked government infrastructure in European countries.

As in the past, the **Iranian intelligence services** continue to spy on and suppress opposition movements and actors at home and abroad. In addition, the services gather political, military, industrial and scientific intelligence in Western countries. The main organisation behind activities targeting Germany continues to be the Ministry of Intelligence (VAJA⁷, usually rendered as MOIS). As well as MOIS, the Quds Force, a special intelligence unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards⁸, is active in Germany.

Iran sees itself as a regional power which is intent on shaping politics beyond its own borders, with a pronounced anti-Western and anti-Israeli thrust. As a result, the Iranian regime is interested in information on the future policy of the West—for example Germany's foreign and security policy. Iran's intelligence-gathering activities are influenced by the escalating confrontation in the Middle East and with Israel.

Iran has declared that, alongside the USA, the state of Israel, its representatives and its prominent supporters are its enemies. This may include leading representatives of organisations in the Jewish diaspora. Iranian intelligence-related organisations therefore spy on (pro-)Israeli and (pro-)Jewish targets in Germany.

On 28 October 2019, the Senate for State Security of the Higher Regional Court of Koblenz (Rhineland-Palatinate) allowed the prosecution of a German-Afghan citizen on charges of an especially serious case of treason and 18 counts of violating official secrecy. He was arrested on 15 January 2019 and held in detention awaiting trial. The accused worked for the Bundeswehr as a translator and cultural adviser and is alleged to have passed on knowledge gleaned from this position to an Iranian intelligence agency. The BfV assisted with the investigation by providing intelligence

7 In Farsi: Vezerat-e Ettela'at-e Jomhouri-ye Eslami-ye Iran – VAJA.

8 In Farsi: Sepah Pasdaran.

reports. On 12 December 2019, the accused's wife was charged with being an accessory to treason.⁹

As reported in the 2018 Annual Report on the Protection of the Constitution, on 1 July 2018, a diplomat accredited with the Iranian Embassy in Vienna was arrested in Germany on a European arrest warrant issued by the Belgian law enforcement authorities. The diplomat, a suspected MOIS agent, is accused of masterminding a planned bombing of an annual gathering in France of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (MEK, Mujahedeen-e-Khalq) in Villepinte, near Paris, on 30 June 2018. The Iranian diplomat is thought to have recruited a Belgian husband and wife of Iranian origin as agents to carry out the bombing. The suspect was extradited to Belgium in early October 2018.

In response to this planned attack, on 8 January 2019 the EU placed a division of MOIS, the Iranian diplomat accused of masterminding the attack, and a former MOIS deputy minister, on the EU terrorist list. In its decision, the Foreign Affairs Council stated that the above-mentioned persons and agencies were involved in terrorist activities. In addition, on 21 January 2019 the Federal Government suspended the licence of Iranian airline Mahan Air to operate flights to and from Germany. This measure was a response to the airline's operations in the Syrian war zone and to Iran's espionage activities.

Iran's potential to carry out cyber operations has increased significantly in recent years, leading to increased activity of Iranian hackers against targets in the country and abroad. The primary targets are in the administration and government, business, science and research, and dissident and opposition groups. This increase in activity can be seen in Germany in the increased use of German IT infrastructures by Iranian actors, among other things. Attacks and preparation for attacks seem to correlate to increases in tensions in the Persian Gulf. The aim of the attacks seems to be on the one hand to bypass the sanctions against Iran and on the other, to collect background information from decision-makers regarding planned political manoeuvres.

⁹ On 23 March 2020, the Higher Regional Court of Koblenz (Rhineland-Palatinate) sentenced the husband to imprisonment for six years and ten months for an especially serious case of treason. The co-accused, who was also his wife, was sentenced to imprisonment for ten months for being an accessory to treason. The enforcement of her custodial sentence was suspended on probation. The sentence is not subject to appeal.

The **Turkish domestic and foreign intelligence service** Millî İstihbarat Teşkilâtı (MIT) is a key element of Turkey's security architecture. The MIT focuses above all on organisations which Turkey classifies as extremist or terrorist. It is also very interested in intelligence concerning organisations and individuals which oppose the current Turkish government.

At present, the priority for the MIT is to gather intelligence on the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the movement led by Islamic cleric Fethullah Gülen. The latter has been labelled a terrorist organisation by the Turkish government, which holds it responsible for the attempted coup in July 2016. The return of alleged members of the Gülen movement from abroad to Turkey, which usually takes place in co-operation with the relevant state agency of the host country, highlights the desire by the government to pursue these people. In isolated cases, such removals were probably conducted by the MIT without the knowledge of the host country.

The MIT also focuses its intelligence activities on politics, industry and the military, as well as research and high-tech. The MIT's activities are accompanied by attempts to influence the Turkish community in Germany as well as individual attempts to shape political opinion and decision-making in all of German society. Organisations with varying degrees of ties to Ankara seek support in Germany and other European countries for Turkey's current policies and defend the Turkish government against criticism.

This strategy of exerting influence largely consists of pointing out supposed and actual cases of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Turkish feeling and exaggerating and emphasising problems in Germany and Europe to counter criticism of political developments in Turkey.

Germany remains one of the MIT's primary intelligence targets outside Turkey. The intensity of Turkish intelligence activities will remain at the same high level regardless of the current political and economic development of the country. Turkey will also continue to exert influence on the Turkish community in Germany through its active diaspora policy.

German companies and research institutes are in the crosshairs of foreign countries and their intelligence services too. Their attacks—whether

carried out in the real world or in cyber space—aim at eliciting business secrets and know-how and at sabotaging economic workflows.

Preventive economic security is a key priority of the German domestic intelligence services. This priority is reflected in the organisation—in conjunction with the domestic intelligence services of the federal states—of several events such as economic security conferences again in 2019. These events provide a setting for exchanging information relevant to economic security, which can then be used across the board to protect businesses and research institutions.

Through the alliance Economic Security Initiative (Initiative Wirtschaftsschutz), which is co-ordinated by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, a number of security agencies, associations and their member companies as well as research institutes offering measures of prevention and detection jointly help companies and research institutes help themselves.

Security of classified information and counter-sabotage

Information that, if it became known, can pose a risk to or damage the existence, the security or the interests of the Federation, may only be made accessible to sufficiently reliable individuals. 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 Government¹⁰ (Security Clearance Check Act (Sicherheitsüberprüfungsgesetz, SÜG)). The aim of preventive personnel protection against sabotage is to ensure that no person considered a security risk is allowed to work in a security-sensitive position in a vital or defence-essential facility.

The BfV is required by law to participate in security clearance checks of people at the federal level. It is responsible for taking the necessary measures in connection with security checks on behalf of the competent bodies. Depending on the type of security check required, within the security clearance check process the BfV carries out three levels of measures as defined by law.

In the last five years, the BfV has contributed to an annual average of approx. 42,000 security clearance checks in the security of classified information and protection against sabotage.

In 2019, 6,102 simple security checks, 29,095 extended security checks and 2,325 extended security checks including security investigations were carried out in connection with the security of classified information. Another 7,327 checks were done in connection with counter-sabotage, along with 11,407 updates of security checks. The BfV contributed to a total of 56,256 checks in connection with the security of classified information and counter-sabotage. This continues the trend in recent years towards higher numbers and more in-depth security clearance checks.

¹⁰ 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 one of the federal states.

The Scientology Organisation (SO)

The ideology of the Scientology Organisation (SO) is strictly based on the writings of founder and leading figure in the movement Lafayette Ron Hubbard (1911-1986). The SO advertised its teachings in the reporting year using Hubbard's book "Dianetics", published in 1950, which explains that the aim is to obtain the perfect human, the "Clear". People who are not "Clears" are denied fundamental and human rights.

According to Hubbard, a nation can only operate a "true democracy" if it is composed entirely of "Clears". The SO sees itself as a ruling elite that will rule the rest of humanity by applying the teachings of Hubbard. This system of a Scientologist government, which would replace democracy, is not compatible with the principle of democracy set out in the Basic Law. State authority in such a system would not be derived from the people. It would not be linked to the people with an uninterrupted chain of legitimacy.

The SO intends to establish a global society based on Scientology. Hubbard's writings reveal that his envisaged society based on Scientology is to be attained via a long-term strategy of expansion, by increasing the SO's revenues and by fighting its critics. In public, the SO projects an image of apolitical religious community and operates supposed aid organisations and social campaigns.

- The association Say No to Drugs, Say Yes to Life claims its aim is to raise awareness of drug addiction and prevention, in particular among young people.
- NARCONON is a counselling service and rehab facility for drug addicts.
- CRIMINON offers assistance and Scientology courses for criminal offenders.
- Applied Scholastics offers a Scientology study tutoring programme for school pupils and university students.
- Youth for Human Rights disseminates information that is intended to introduce people to the ideology of the organisation, claiming that its aim is to raise awareness among young people of human rights.

The number of members in Germany is currently about 3,500 people. The number of high-profile public activities by the SO remains low, but the organisation uses the Internet, with its spectrum of multimedia formats, as a key propaganda and advertising platform. It uses social networks to enhance its image, recruit new members and for networking, and it targets young people in particular.

Scientology Network is the SO free streaming site, in English with German subtitles. The organisation also distributes Internet TV content through a range of broadcasters. Another example of the broad spectrum of recruitment methods used by the SO is the FreeSpiritSingles English-language dating site, which refers to the SO publication *The Way to Happiness*.

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