



Bundesamt für
Verfassungsschutz

How can I identify extremists and members of foreign secret services within my environment?

Important information
for refugees in Germany



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Contents

What is this leaflet intended for? 5

How can I identify Islamist extremists? 5

How can I identify Kurdish extremists? 10

How can I identify secret service officers? 13

Where can I get help and where can I leave my information? 15

Contact us 16

What is this leaflet intended for?

Just like you have done, many people are currently seeking shelter in Germany. The German domestic intelligence service Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV) as a security agency is committed to protecting people like you and to safeguarding democracy in Germany.

There are current threats posed by

- Islamists and terrorists trying to win refugees over to their ideologies under the guise of humanitarian aid,
- potential attackers disguised as refugees, who are smuggled to Europe by foreign jihadist organisations,
- foreign secret service agents trying to recruit, spy on, threaten, or blackmail refugees to exploit them for their illegal activities.

We want you and the people around you to be as safe as possible from these dangerous groups. Their activities are not only a threat to your and your families' safety, but may also destroy your chance of finding shelter in Germany and building a new life here. In order to identify and prevent such threats for you and your families, the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz will need your assistance.

The below information aims at raising your awareness of extremist terrorist and secret service activities and groups of people.

How can I identify Islamist extremists?

Islamist extremists (so-called Islamists) believe in an alleged "divinely ordained order", which state and society have to submit to.

Islamists consider their interpretation of the legal system and values – derived from the Islamic tenets of faith, e.g. the Koran – the only legitimate rules definitively governing all the social, legal, economic and political issues. From their point of view, laws made by humans (e.g. the laws in a democratic society such as Germany) are invalid, and they consequently reject them.

This fundamentalist interpretation of Islam contradicts the constitutional principles that are firmly established in the German Grundgesetz (Basic Law), i.e.

- equal rights for all people,
- freedom of opinion and expression and free exercise of religion,
- human dignity.

Islamists try to abolish these essential principles using various strategies and tactics.

Below you will find some examples of Islamist organisations and groups, which mostly operate without using violence in Germany:



"Muslim Brotherhood"



"Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya" (HAMAS)



"Hizb ut-Tahrir" (HuT)



"Caucasian Emirate" (Chechen Islamists)



"Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg" (Iranians loyal to the regime)



"Hezbollah" (Shiite Islamists)

- These organisations or groups support the armed struggle of terrorist organisations in their home countries through propagandistic, logistic, or financial means, or
- they try to disseminate their extremist interpretation of the Islamic faith to expand their influence on society in Germany.

One of the subgroups of the Islamists are the Salafists. They are avowed enemies of a free society based on democracy. Salafists pretend to align their religious practice and conduct of life verbatim with the "true" principles of the Koran defined by themselves, following the example of the Prophet Muhammad or of the early Muslims.

Salafists assume that over the past centuries the "pure Islamic faith" has been distorted by, as they see it, unlawful alterations.

Salafists in Germany can partly be identified through certain features of their outer appearance and specific activities, including:

- concerning women: full veiling in public,
- concerning men: a strong growth of beard and a trimmed moustache as well as supposedly traditional costumes ending above their ankles.
- Salafists attract attention by their strong missionary efforts as well as by generally defaming dissidents as "unbelievers".

In Germany, especially Salafists – but also other Islamist groups – have time and again been striving to make contact with refugees. They do not necessarily display their anti-constitutional views openly but they rather try to gradually develop personal sympathies in a subtle way by support activities, so as to obtain commitment to their ideological messages.

These purportedly harmless support activities may include:

- the distribution of religious objects, including copies of the Koran and prayer mats,
- religious care provided in the form of Koran lessons and prayers in a refugee accommodation centre or in an Islamist mosque,
- invitations for Islamic events or other festivities,
- food and clothing donations, and
- language courses as well as interpreter services offered in dealing with German authorities.



Salafists distributing copies of the Koran

At times it can be difficult to distinguish the alleged aid offered by Islamists from the support provided by humanitarian aid organisations. It is therefore advisable to thoroughly check any offers of help by watching out for the following aspects:

- Are support activities accompanied by missionary efforts or discussions about "true" and "wrong" religious views?
- Does the distributed material show any striking features, for example symbols like those shown in this leaflet or contents with radical or anti-constitutional (religious) references opposing the German democratic basic order?
- Do the individuals carrying out support activities draw your attention to specific mosques and do they call upon you to visit them?

In addition, the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz deals with intelligence to indicate that suspected members of Islamist-terrorist resp. jihadist organisations intend to enter Germany.

In their current territories of power, and partly even worldwide, terrorist or jihadist organisations by using the most brutal kind of violence try to establish a social order that, so they say, is ordained by God. Below you will find the groupings that are particularly relevant in this context:



"Islamic State" (IS)



"Jabhat Fath al-Sham" (JFS),
formerly "Jabhat al-Nusra" (JaN)



"Taliban"

Islamist terrorists (so-called jihadists) use the refugee routes to Germany to move without being recognised and to commit terrorist attacks.

There may be jihadists involved when

- consuming or downloading Salafi and jihadist messages (e.g. jihadist online propaganda).
- displaying the flag of HAMAS, Hezbollah, IS, JaN/JFS, Taliban, or another terrorist organisation.
- pledging loyalty to the IS leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, or to Aiman al-Zawahiri, the Al Qaeda leader.
- claiming to have had contact with members of a jihadist or terrorist organisation.
- making statements on participation in combat activities on the side of jihadist groups in Syria, Iraq, or Afghanistan.
- aggressively disapproving of western "interference" in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan or Palestine with simultaneously advocating jihadist acts of violence, and
- approving of the fight against the state of Israel and the "extermination" of Jews.



Jihadist propaganda distributed by the "Islamic State"

How can I identify Kurdish extremists?

The activities undertaken by Kurdish extremists in Germany are also subject to monitoring by the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz including in particular

- the Kurdish Workers' Party "Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan" (PKK), which has been banned in Germany, and
- its Syrian subsidiary, the "Partiya Yekitîya Demokrat" ("Democratic Union Party", PYD).

The most important PKK-affiliated organisation in Germany is the "Navenda Civaka Demokratîk ya Kurden li Almanyayê" ("Democratic Society Centre of Kurdish People in Germany", NAV-DEM).



"Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan" (PKK)



"Partiya Yekitîya Demokrat" (PYD)



"Navenda Civaka Demokratîk ya Kurden li Almanyayê" (NAV-DEM)

Both PKK and PYD call for a greater cultural and political independence and autonomy for the Kurdish minority living in Turkey and in the neighbouring Kurdish settlement areas in Syria and Iraq.

PKK and its affiliated organisations consider Germany a safe haven, from where they can support their terrorist parent organisations in their home country propagandistically, but also in terms of material and finances.

To strengthen their organisation at home, PKK also tries to win over new adherents to support activities and/or to participation in terrorist acts of violence in Turkey. These recruitment efforts are frequently directed at refugees of Kurdish origin.

Such activities undertaken by PKK violate German law and, what is more, damage the relations Germany has with other countries!



Invitation to the "Zilan Women's Festival"



Advertising a PKK mass rally on the occasion of the Kurdish New Year's Festival "Newroz"



Abdullah Öcalan



Kurdish New Year's Festival "Newroz"

Similar to the Islamists' strategies, Kurdish extremists offer assistance to refugees, referring them to Kurdish associations in Germany, where social contact can be established. The assistance offered ranges from donations of food and clothes to support provided when dealing with the authorities.

Kurdish extremists make an effort to subtly convince others of their ideas and motives by gradually developing personal sympathies.

The following activities may indicate that individuals are sympathisers, supporters, or members of PKK or PYD:

- fundraising campaigns for the Kurdish "war of resistance" in Turkey as well as in Iraq and Syria,
- addressing the situation of the detained PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, and calling for his release,
- promoting participation in PKK events, e.g. the "Zilan Women's Festival" or the "Mazlum Dogan Youth, Culture, and Sports Festival".

PKK and PYD members do not necessarily display their actual ideological ideas and intentions openly, and so it is often difficult to set them apart from the large number of purely humanitarian-motivated refugee aid workers.

How can I identify secret service officers?

Many foreign secret services pay special attention to dissidents or opponents of the regime living in German exile, which may also include you.

The secret services of Syria or Iran, for example, try to spy on dissidents and their families, infiltrate their circles, or contain their activities (which may also apply in their home countries). Sometimes they even attempt to oblige refugees to carry out spying activities themselves (with or without exerting pressure).



This is why it must be assumed that:

Whoever actively opposed the system in his/her home country will be of interest to that regime's secret services in Germany too!

The refugee movements towards Germany constitute a great opportunity for foreign secret services to infiltrate covertly acting secret service staff – equipped with false identities and with the refugee status – into the Federal Republic of Germany. Their purpose is to investigate into "fellow refugees" and to support intelligence operations controlled from the respective home countries.

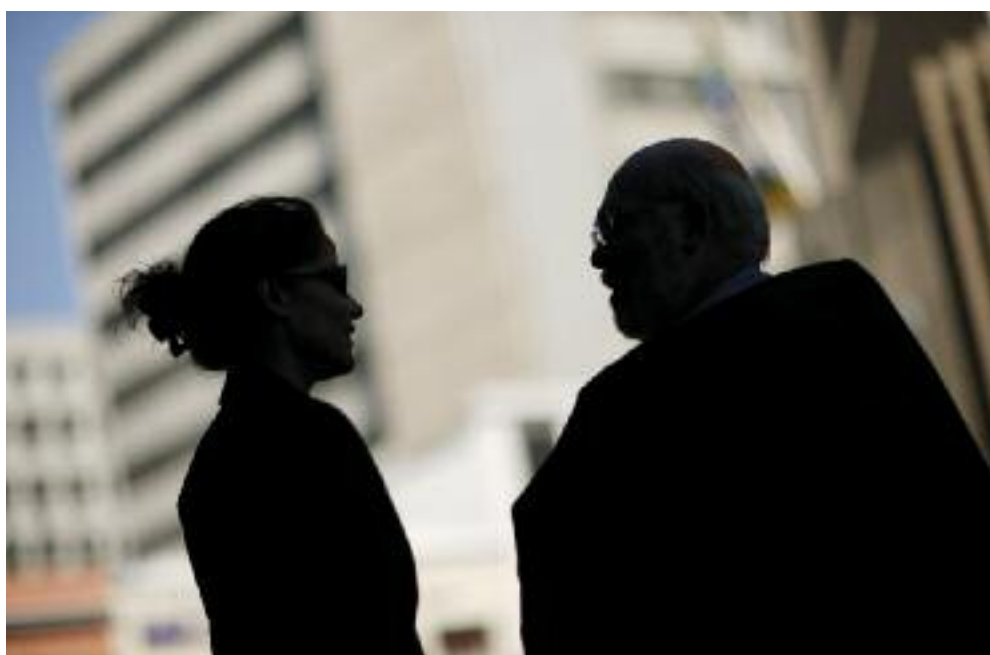


Generally, secret service officers are anxious to conceal their affiliation under all circumstances, which makes them difficult to identify.

Make sure to closely examine suspicious individuals!

Among others, the following aspects may indicate an individual's links with a foreign secret service:

- a conspicuous interest in your political opinions and motives for leaving your home country,
- threats and intimidation attempts, e.g. by addressing your family's situation in your home country,
- an extremely friendly, polite, and obliging behaviour by providing material and doing you financial favours.



Refugees who have entered Germany may also include former members of foreign secret services who have actually deserted so as to no longer be forced to participate in state persecution or crimes. You can ask these people whether they want to reveal their former affiliation to the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz. This may help to avert harm from innocent people and to investigate political persecution and state acts of violence in your home countries.



Where can I get help and where can I leave my information?

Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz closely co-operates with the police authorities and the judiciary to protect you from the threats described in this leaflet.

However, in a lot of cases the authorities' sole attention will not suffice.

The help of all people living in Germany is of special importance to a democracy on guard ready to defend itself.

So, if you

- see any indications that persons in your environment have links of an extremist or terrorist nature,
- notice any activities carried out in or at a refugee accommodation centre by extremist individuals or groups,
- gain any information on former members of secret services or espionage activities carried out by foreign secret services,

we strongly encourage you to either contact the persons responsible in a refugee accommodation centre (its management), the nearest police station, or the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz.

Your information is very important to us and will of course be treated with the strictest confidentiality and under the utmost protection of your identity!

- Please make sure to also inform your family, friends, or acquaintances about the dangers illustrated in this leaflet.
- Talk about this leaflet or pass it on to others.
- Raise the awareness of your environment about the need to inform the police or the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz on anti-constitutional efforts or on activities supposedly carried out on behalf of a foreign secret service.
- Contribute to the protection of your family and friends and thus also to the protection of our free democratic basic order!

Contact us

Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz

Headquarters

Phone: 0221 / 792 - 0 (German)

Email: poststelle@bfv.bund.de

Alert hotline for Islamist terrorism:

Phone: 0221 / 792 - 33 66 (German, English, Turkish, Arabic)

Email: HiT@bfv.bund.de

Our alert hotline (German and English) is available 24/7.
Help in Turkish and Arabic is available between 09:00 and 15:00 from Monday to Friday.



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Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz
Public Relations (Öffentlichkeitsarbeit)
Merianstraße 100
50765 Köln
oeffentlichkeitsarbeit@bfv.bund.de
www.verfassungsschutz.de
Phone: +49(0)221/792-0
Fax: +49(0)221/792-2915

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