



Federal Ministry
of the Interior, Building
and Community

Brief summary 2018 Report on the Protection of the Constitution

Facts and Trends



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2018 REPORT ON THE PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION
FACTS AND TRENDS

Politically motivated crime¹

The Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) registered a total of 36,062 politically motivated offences in 2018 – a drop of 8.7 % compared with the previous year (2017: 39,505). This figure includes 14,088 propaganda offences (39.1 %; 2017: 13,406 = 33.9 %). The number of violent crimes that were categorised as politically motivated fell from 3,754 in 2017 to 3,366 in 2018. Of the total number of politically motivated offences, 27,656 (or 76.7 %) were found to have an extremist background (2017: 29,855, or 75.6 %), while 1,244 (2017: 1,901) could not be assigned to any particular category.

Key points:

- While the overall number of right-wing extremist offences registered in 2018 fell by 0.3 % compared with 2017, the number of violent crimes committed by right-wing extremists rose by 3.2 %. Among these violent crimes, all cases of attempted homicide (six in total) were motivated by xenophobia. The number of xenophobic offences resulting in bodily injury rose by 7 %.
- After a sharp rise in the number of violent crimes committed by left-wing extremists in connection with the G20 summit in Hamburg in July 2017, the number of left-wing extremist offences fell in 2018 – as expected – by 27.7 %. The number of violent crimes fell even further – by 38.7 %.
- The number of extremist offences categorised as "politically motivated crime – foreign ideology" came to 1,928. This very sharp rise of 62.4 % was mainly attributable to nationwide protests – mostly by PKK members – against the Turkish military offensive in northern Syria.

Details:

In the category of **right-wing politically motivated crime**, 19,409 offences (2017: 19,467) were recorded as having an extremist background. At 1,088, the number of violent crimes with a right-wing extremist background rose slightly compared with the previous year (2017: 1,054). The number of attempted homicides rose from four in 2017 to six in 2018.

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

All six cases were motivated by xenophobia. The number of violent xenophobic offences rose by 6.1 % to 821 (2017: 774). Attacks on accommodation centres for asylum seekers motivated by right-wing extremism fell again in 2018 (after a dramatic increase in 2015 and 2016) to just below the level of 2014 (2018: 164, 2017: 286, 2016: 907, 2015: 894, 2014: 170). Violent crimes by right-wing extremists against actual or supposed left-wing extremists rose by 15.3 % to 113 (2017: 98).

In 2018, 776 extremist offences were attributed to "**Reichsbürger**" and "**Selbstverwalter**" (2017: 783). Of these, 160 were violent crimes (2017: 130), chiefly blackmail (98) or resistance to law enforcement officers (39). Coercion and threats also accounted for a considerable number of offences (177).

In the category of **left-wing politically motivated crime**, 4,622 offences (2017: 6,393) were recorded as having an extremist background. Of this number, 1,010 were violent crimes (2017: 1,648). Following the rise of left-wing extremist offences (including violent crimes) in 2017, which was mainly in connection with the G20 summit in Hamburg, the number of offences committed by left-wing extremists in 2018 fell by 27.7 %. Most left-wing extremist violent crimes were committed in North Rhine-Westphalia (446) – more than double the number for 2017 in that federal state. These offences were largely committed in connection with the climate protests in the Hambach Forest.

In 2018, the number of extremist offences in the category of **politically motivated crime – religious ideology** decreased considerably to 453 (2017: 907). Forty-four of these offences were violent crimes: Two of these were homicides (one successful and one attempted) and 37 were cases of bodily injury. Sixty-three offences (2017: 112) 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 144 offences (2017: 310) 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**, 1,928 offences (2017: 1,187) had an extremist background. This very sharp increase of 62.4 % was largely attributable to nationwide protests – mostly by PKK members – against the Turkish military offensive in Afrin Canton, northern Syria. These offences were predominantly breaches of the Act Governing Private Associations (Vereinsgesetz, VereinsG) (43.6 %), but also included 355 violent crimes (18.4 %). Compared with 2017 (182) the number of violent crimes nearly doubled, most of them being cases of bodily injury (60.3 %). In 2018, these violent crimes included five homicides (four attempted and one successful).

Right-wing extremism

By the end of 2018, the number of extremist sympathisers totalled 24,100, after subtracting multiple memberships (2017: 24,000). As in the previous year, 12,700 persons, or more than half of all right-wing extremists, were categorised as violence-oriented.

Right-wing extremist following¹		
	2017	2018
Political party membership	6,050	5,510
Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD, National-Democratic Party of Germany)	4,500	4,000
DIE RECHTE (The Right)	650	600
Der III. Weg (The Third Way)	500	530
Membership of other right-wing extremist parties ²	400	380
Membership of groups/organisations not affiliated with or independent of political parties³	6,300	6,600
No membership of any right-wing extremist grouping/ organisation⁴	12,900	13,240
Total	25,250	25,350
after subtracting multiple memberships	24,000	24,100
of which violence-oriented right-wing extremists	12,700	12,700

1 Some of these figures are estimated and rounded off.
2 Including members of the Bürgerbewegung pro NRW (pro NRW, Civic Movement for North Rhine-Westphalia) and, in 2018, members of the Freie Bürger Union (FBU) Landesverband Saarland (union of free citizens, Saarland state association).
3 This includes some of the 950 right-wing extremist "Reichsbürger" ("citizens of the Reich") and "Selbstverwalter" ("sovereigns") who are organised in cross-regional groups, as well as 600 members of the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (IDB, Identitarian Movement Germany), which has been placed under full surveillance as a suspected threat; see p. 82 et seq. of the full 2018 Annual Report on the Protection of the Constitution). There is evidence that the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland engages in right-wing extremist activities, which is why the BfV has placed the group under full surveillance as a suspected threat (Verdachtsfall).
4 This includes some of the 950 right-wing extremist "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" who do not belong to any organised group.

After an increase in the number of right-wing extremist **criminal offences and violent crimes** in 2015 and 2016 and a significant drop in 2017, the number of criminal offences fell by 0.3 %, while the number of violent crimes rose by 3.2 %. A total of 6 attempted homicides were categorised as suspected right-wing extremist crimes (2017: 4). There were also indications that these crimes had a xenophobic background. Xenophobia continues to be the main motive for right-wing extremist violence. The rise in right-wing extremist offences motivated by anti-Semitism during the reporting year is also noticeable. Most of these offences were incitement and illegal propaganda activity. But the number of violent crimes also saw a major increase of 71.4 % (2018: 48, 2017: 28).

Anti-Semitism continues to be an area of agitation and ideological identifier for right-wing extremists. For years, anti-Semitic agitation among right-wing extremists has waxed and waned depending on current political events. Right-wing extremist propaganda is currently dominated by other issues and hostile stereotypes which right-wing extremists believe are more likely to be taken up in the public discourse. These hostile stereotypes include "foreigners", in particular asylum-seekers and Muslims, but also policy-makers. Right-wing extremists focus on what they consider excessive foreign influence and an imagined threat to national identity.

The events in **Chemnitz**, Saxony, deserve special attention in this context: After a German national was killed in Chemnitz on 26 August 2018, and asylum-seekers were suspected of the crime, there were massive protests in Chemnitz and several other German cities in response to calls by right-wing extremists, among others. A rally on 27 August 2018 organised by the Bürgerbewegung PRO CHEMNITZ (PRO CHEMNITZ, civic movement for Chemnitz), a local movement which has been classified as right-wing extremist since late 2018, drew the largest number of participants: as many as 6,000 persons.

Although non-extremist participants outnumbered extremists, the behaviour and chants of the right-wing extremists dominated the scene at the rallies. The large numbers attending the PRO CHEMNITZ demonstrations indicate that far more people turned out than belong to the classic right-wing extremist scene. It was also noticeable that the

entire right-wing extremist spectrum – neo-Nazis, right-wing extremist hooligans and members of right-wing extremist political parties – all worked together, which can be seen as the force driving the high degree of mobilisation.

Although the total number of **demonstrations nationwide** influenced by right-wing extremism increased only slightly during the reporting year,² the total number of participants jumped drastically, largely due to the demonstrations in Chemnitz, to about 57,950 (2017: about 16,400).

Again in 2018, **right-wing extremist concerts** were an important part of the right-wing extremist scene in Germany. Large-scale events attended by relatively large numbers of people gained attention in the news media and by politicians. As in 2017, the largest event in terms of attendance was again held in Themar, Thuringia, where as many as 2,250 right-wing extremists from all over Germany gathered on 8 and 9 June 2018 for the "National Movement Days", as the event was called. A "Shield and Sword" festival was held in Ostritz, Saxony, on 20 and 21 April 2018 and again on 2 and 3 November 2018. These larger events featuring music and speakers were attended by right-wing extremists from all over Germany and other European countries: as many as 1,300 at the April event and up to 800 in November. The public order authorities prevented two other large-scale events from taking place because property ownership was unclear or the property owner had failed to grant permission.

One trend clearly demonstrating that a large share of the right-wing extremist scene is violence-oriented is the growing popularity of **martial arts** during the reporting period. Martial arts events were organised in an increasingly professional manner and consistently drew audiences numbering in the hundreds, indicating that martial arts have assumed greater significance for right-wing extremists. The largest and most important martial arts tournament in the right-wing extremist scene is the "Battle of the Nibelungs" (KdN) held every year since 2013. In 2018, it was held in Ostritz, Saxony, on 13 October and attracted about 850 visitors from Germany and other European countries.

International contacts and exchanges within the right-wing extremist scene in Europe continue to be very important. This is demonstrated by

the regular participation of European right-wing extremists in events in Germany and by the fact that German right-wing extremists visit other European countries, for example for the "Day of Honour" in Budapest, Hungary, in February or the "Lukov March" in Sophia, Bulgaria. The number of German right-wing extremist participants was higher in 2018, indicating the importance of these events.

Members of the right-wing extremist scene and sympathisers make intensive use of the **Internet**, for example to advertise their campaigns, mobilise support for events or plan activities. An integral part of right-wing extremists' public presence is their prompt and regular Internet reporting on and documentation of the full range of their activities. The scene is active mainly in social networks, text messaging and video platforms, which it uses to communicate openly or in private groups and to disseminate its propaganda. One format popular with right-wing extremists is video blogging, or vlogging. The potential of this format is apparent from the YouTube channel "Der Volkslehrer" (the people's teacher), which has more than 60,000 subscribers,³ reaching more than ten times as many as the YouTube channels of "classic" right-wing extremists, such as the NPD's media channel "Deutsche Stimme" (DS-TV, German Voice), which has slightly more than 5,800 subscribers.

Right-wing extremist parties did not do especially well in elections during the reporting year, nor were they able to gain lasting national attention through special activities.

The waning significance of the **Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands** (NPD, National-Democratic Party of Germany) is apparent from its declining membership, which was down to about 4,000 persons in 2018 (2017: 4,500), and its consistently poor results in recent elections. The party did not even take part in the Bavarian state elections on 14 October 2018; in Hesse on 28 October 2018, it received only 0.2 % of the vote. At its national party conference in Büdingen, Hesse on 17 November 2018, the NPD agreed to designate its current member of the European Parliament, Udo Voigt, again as its top candidate for the European parliamentary elections in 2019, after he defeated a challenger for the candidacy.

3 Date of information: 24 January 2019

The party's deputy national chair, Thorsten Heise, an outspoken representative of the NPD's neo-National Socialist current, was at particular pains to demonstrate a capacity for action. For example, he organised the "Shield and Sword" festivals in Ostritz, Saxony in April and November 2018. His new strategy was to combine politics, music, martial arts and right-wing "lifestyle" at these festivals. In this way, Heise is attempting a strategic reorientation of the NPD, also in his own interest, through collaboration with groups not affiliated with the party and with representatives of other right-wing extremist parties in order to regain a leading role for the NPD in the "national resistance".

The silence of the other party leaders, above all the national chair, Frank Franz, shows that the party has no other strategic alternatives of its own for reorientation in the long term.

Although the party **DIE RECHTE** (The Right) announced in early 2018 its intention to expand its organisation particularly in eastern Germany, achieve a record number of members and establish new regional branches, its membership actually dropped slightly (2018: 600; 2017: 650). Following the party-internal conflicts in 2017, Sascha Krolzig, the chair of the North Rhine-Westphalia regional association, and his deputy Michael Brück were elected as national party co-chairs at the national party conference on 1 April 2018. Party activities continue to be centred on the North Rhine-Westphalia regional association, which has the largest membership.

For the 2019 European parliamentary elections, DIE RECHTE put together a list of candidates, most of whom are neo-Nazis. The top candidate on the list is the 90-year-old Holocaust denier Ursula Haverbeck-Wetzel, who is currently in prison, and whom the party described as "Germany's best-known dissident".

The party made its anti-Semitism clear through numerous other activities in 2018. For example, on the 70th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel, it held a vigil in Dortmund, North Rhine-Westphalia, where a large banner with the words "Israel is our misfortune" was displayed. The slogan "Anyone who loves Germany is anti-Semitic!" was chanted at several demonstrations.

Founded in 2013, the small right-wing extremist party **Der III. Weg** (The Third Way), like DIE RECHTE a collection of members of the neo-Nazi scene, grew slightly during the reporting year (2018: 530 members; 2017: 500 members). But the party was unable again in 2018 to expand its organisation. Most of its "bases" are located near its regional association "Mitte". Its base "Vogtland" has its own "citizens' office" in Plauen, Saxony, which regularly initiates high-profile activities. The party's activities, such as its "National Patrols", the "German Winter Aid" campaign and leisure activities for children also appear to be popular beyond the party's own membership. For example, Der III. Weg organised a demonstration "against violence by foreigners" in Plauen on 1 September 2018, in which about 1,000 people took part – many more than the number of party members in the region.

The "Winter Aid" campaign in Saxony was aimed at increasing public awareness of the party, recruiting new members and gaining votes in the 2019 local and state elections in Saxony in which the party plans to participate. At its party conference on 7 April 2018, the party also decided to participate in the 2019 European parliamentary elections, with the motto "EUROPE AWAKE! A European confederation instead of EU dictatorship!", and entered a list of candidates with party chair Klaus Armstroff at the top.

Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter

The category of "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" (literally, "citizens of the Reich" and "self-administrators") spans a broad range of individuals and organisations with very different ideologies. The scene includes individuals not affiliated with any organisation, small to very small groupings, groups active across state borders, and virtual networks. 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.

It is not possible to draw a clear distinction between "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter". Both groups use nearly identical arguments: "Reichsbürger" focus on the continued existence of some kind of "German Reich" and reject the Federal Republic of Germany; "Selbstverwalter" often declare themselves independent of the state. Some explicitly declare that they have "seceded" from the Federal Republic of Germany.

The entire scene of "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" should be considered **hostile to the state**. In 2018, the scene was thought to comprise about 19,000 persons nationwide (2017: 16,500). About 950 of them can be considered right-wing extremists (2017: 900). Anti-Semitic ideology and arguments are used by this right-wing extremist segment in particular.

The increase in the numbers of "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" since last year is the result of more information being available to the domestic intelligence services. On the one hand, further significant growth in the coming years is unlikely, not least due to extensive and rigorous measures taken by the authorities. On the other hand, the scene is not likely to shrink significantly either, as "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" tend to hold fast to their ideological convictions.

Most "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" are between 40 and 60 years old, and about three-quarters of them are male. Although the share of women may seem low, at about 25 % it is noticeably higher than among right-wing extremists, and women fill some important functions in the scene.

"Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" often have an **affinity for weapons**. At the end of 2018, about 910 of them had weapons permits, or about 5 % of the total (2017: 1,100). Many weapons permits have been revoked since monitoring of the scene began. The domestic intelligence services are aware of 570 weapons permits that have been revoked so far.

In 2018, **enforcement measures** involving "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" resulted in large numbers of weapons being found, evidence of the ongoing interest in weapons within the scene. For example, police officers found a total of 93 weapons, including knives, pistols and rifles as well as about 200 kilos of ammunition, belonging to a member of the scene in Münster, North Rhine-Westphalia, on 7 February 2018. During a search in Sondershausen, Thuringia, on 28 May 2018, police seized 50 firearms and a large quantity of ammunition.

The scene was very active again during the reporting year. One tactic often used by "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" is sending large numbers of letters to government offices and agencies to disrupt their official business and intimidate their staff or expose them to ridicule. Some "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" publish information about those they consider their enemies. For example, in 2018 a "national criminal register" was published in the form of "wanted" posters issued "in the name of members of the Reich and state of German peoples" accusing individuals of various fictitious crimes. The publication was intended to threaten and intimidate the persons whose names were listed.

Criminal behaviour by "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" includes insulting public officials, issuing threats, forging or falsifying documents, resisting law enforcement officers and possessing weapons without a permit. Members of the scene also often unlawfully use hidden cameras or tape recorders to record their confrontations with government officials or in court, which they sometimes publish on the Internet. "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" unlawfully claim the authority to perform tasks of the state, such as producing their own made-up documents or setting up various "governments" and "administrations" – which ultimately constitutes establishing state-like structures. They also refuse to pay taxes, fees and levies.

Their interactions with the police are also worth noting: on the one hand, they try to prevent officers from taking action against members of the scene; on the other hand, they try to persuade officers to join them.

A new group within the scene is the Geeinte deutsche Völker und Stämme (GdVuSt, united German peoples and tribes). It is a small group that gained attention in 2018 with its aggressively worded letters threatening addressees with imprisonment, fines and retaliation against family members. On its website, the GdVuSt describes three forms of state organisation in pseudo-theoretical terms and ranks them, claiming that the "state of nature", which it wants to establish, is the highest in terms of legal status. The GdVuSt disparages the Federal Republic of Germany as the lowest form of state organisation and a "state built on trade". Other groups in the scene include the Staatenbund Deutsches Reich (confederacy of the German Reich), the Verfassunggebende Versammlung (constituent assembly), the Exil-Regierung Deutsches Reich (German Reich exile government) and the Amt für Menschenrecht (office for human rights).

"Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" are thoroughly convinced of their ideas and views, which they disseminate mainly via the Internet. Their sometimes aggressive behaviour is mostly directed at staff of government agencies and offices.

Their affinity for weapons represents a considerable potential threat. The security authorities are therefore striving to have all their weapons permits revoked and to prevent new permits from being issued to them. However, after their weapons permits have been revoked, they are likely to possess weapons illegally.

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 almost 8.5 % to a total of 32,000 in 2018 (2017: 29,500).

The number of violence-oriented left-wing extremists remained unchanged at 9,000 people. More than one in four of all left-wing extremists can thus be classed as violence-oriented. The number of autonomist left-wing extremists increased by some 6 % to 7,400 (2017: 7,000).

Membership of non-violent strictly ideological left-wing extremist groups rose by almost 12 % to 24,000 (2017: 21,400).

Left-wing extremist following¹			
	2016	2017	2018
Violence-oriented left-wing extremists²	8.500	9.000	9.000
including:			
Autonomists	6.800	7.000	7.400
Anarchists	800	800	800
Strictly ideological left-wing extremists	-	-	800
Non-violent strictly ideological left-wing extremists and other left-wing extremists	20.900	21.400	24.000
Total	29.400	30.400	33.000
after subtracting multiple memberships Mehrfachmitgliedschaft	28.500	29.500	32.000
<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 for the first time.</p>			

In 2018, the total number of left-wing extremist criminal offences fell. While in the previous year 6,393 offences were recorded, this number dropped to 4,622 offences in 2018. The number of violent offences by left-

wing extremists also fell last year. A total of 1,010 offences were recorded in 2018, in comparison with 1,648 violent offences in 2017.

The reduction in left-wing extremist criminal and violent offences is primarily due to the fact that there were no major events relevant to left-wing groups in 2018 comparable to the G20 summit in Hamburg in 2017 or the opening of the new headquarters of the European Central Bank in Frankfurt (Main) in 2015. There was no opportunity in the reporting year for left-wing extremists to express their full potential for violence at one event. In spite of the lower figures throughout Germany in the 2018 reporting year, there has been an overall increase in violent crimes committed by left-wing extremists in the last ten years. This increase is not linear; instead it is recorded in waves, generally with a marked upswing in years when major events take place that are of relevance to left-wing extremist groups. In the years between such events, confrontational violence in the form of direct clashes with political opponents or the police at demonstrations and other events often mutates into covertly planned attacks by violence-oriented left-wing extremists.

At the same time it has been repeatedly noted that there is often a considerable increase in violent crimes by left-wing extremists in federal states in which supraregional events take place that are also significant for left-wing extremists. One example of this would be the climate protests in the Hambach Forest, which came to a head in 2018 and which were the setting for criminal offences by left-wing extremists, including on the fringes of the central events. As a result, North Rhine-Westphalia recorded an increase in left-wing extremist violent offences of 133.5 % in comparison with the previous year (2018: 446, 2017: 191). The number of violent offences committed by left-wing extremists also continued to increase in the federal states that are home to the left-wing extremist "hotspots" Berlin and Leipzig (Berlin: +47.7 %, Saxony +13.9 %), while in Hamburg the figure dropped by 96.1 %, as expected in the year following the G20 summit.

Autonomists are the largest group among violence-oriented left-wing extremists by a considerable margin. Although autonomists do not have

a homogeneous structure either in terms of ideology or strategy and level of organisation, their actions are based on broadly similar principles: the individual and his or her self-realisation are at the centre of political action, and all forms of external control are rejected. Autonomists therefore aim to overthrow the existing forms of state and society, which are considered "authoritarian", in favour of a new order that is free of domination, without the transition phase of a "dictatorship of the proletariat" as provided for in Marxism. According to this strand of political thought, social wrongs and injustices can only be tackled by overthrowing "the system" as a whole.

The 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"), which in turn have loose relationships within the left-wing scene to other small groups with which they cooperate as the circumstances require. Autonomist groupings form first and foremost in major cities and in university towns. The political scene usually has a central meeting point ("autonomous centre") which gives rise to a network of small groups, individuals and local offshoots of interregional or national organisations and structures. The largest scenes are in Berlin, Hamburg and Leipzig. Not only do these communities have above-average levels of activity and mobilisation potential, but they also commit large numbers of criminal offences and violent crimes. In the long term, for strategic purposes many autonomists do establish more formal networks. The aim is to increase their individual political clout and the impact of their autonomous action, while ensuring effective protection against political opponents. Autonomists also cooperate with civil society groupings and join action alliances as circumstances dictate. The aim is to expand the demands of such groups to include extremist content, while embedding autonomist positions within society as a whole and bringing a militant component to choreographed protest. These "post-autonomist" groups have a tendency to take a new approach to some of the premises on which autonomist politics is based. The most successful representatives of such groups are the Interventionistische Linke (IL, Interventionalist Left) and the ...ums Ganze! Bündnis (uG, ...all or nothing alliance).

Left-wing extremists take part in social and political debates and protests in order to make their position seem more socially acceptable, to gain new members or sympathisers, and to exploit them to achieve their aims. One of their goals in doing so is to increase public acceptance of their forms of action. To achieve their strategic aims, left-wing extremists use **action alliances and campaigns**. The international networking of protests is also an important component.

The group Rote Hilfe e.V. (RH, Red Aid) launched the "**United we stand!**" solidarity campaign on 9 May 2017 in close association with the protests against the G20 summit in Hamburg. This campaign was ongoing in 2018. The campaign aim was to fan the fear of "state repression" even before the G20 summit. After the event, it aimed to ensure that the interpretation of violent action at the G20 summit was that the violence could be attributed solely to the state and state actors, allowing it to gloss over its own actions as legitimate resistance. Based on this, the group condemned both the measures taken by the police and the authorities in preparation for the summit, and the specific police intervention during the summit protests, and launched a campaign calling for donations for further "support work". The RH also issued publications providing advice for persons subject to state measures such as searches or arrests, and provided legal help.

After the G20 summit, the organisation focused its campaign on the criminal prosecutions resulting from the violent protests and declared its solidarity with the "Hamburg prisoners". Letters from "G20 prisoners", statements on ongoing criminal proceedings and calls for protest actions against "state repression" were published regularly on the "United we stand!" blog. Regular "trial dates" were also published, with calls to attend the trials as a show of solidarity, and demonstrations were held outside prisons.

Left-wing extremists also played a leading role again in 2018 in the "Climate protection fight" organised by the "End of the road" action association, which is influenced by left-wing extremism, and its eponymous campaign. The association's protests centred in particular on a call for mass civil disobedience from 25 to 29 October 2018 in the lignite mining belt between Aachen and Cologne in North Rhine-Westphalia.

The protest was against lignite mining and the mine operator companies. The mood of the protest was influenced by the clearance between September and October 2018 of more than 80 tree houses and structures on the ground in the Hambach Forest. This political milieu sees the forest as a symbol of resistance against what they consider to be a coal industry which focuses purely on profit. The clearance of the forest was accompanied by numerous arson attacks and damage to property of the operator company and in particular its partner companies, as well as attacks on the police deployed during the clearance. It can be assumed that these attacks were motivated by left-wing extremism. Two major demonstrations took place on 27 October 2018 as part of the mass civil disobedience. According to police figures, a total of around 5,500 people took part in the demonstrations, including members of the German left-wing extremist spectrum and persons from abroad. In terms of numbers, this was the largest action carried out to date by the "End of the Road" campaign since it came into being in 2014. The nearby motorway was blocked for short periods during the protests. Some 2,500 people also managed to blockade the private coal conveyor for some 24 hours. A coal excavator was temporarily occupied, and there were also sit-ins and human chains.

The campaign associated with the strategy paper "**Red Berlin**" is an excellent example of the IL's strategy of exploiting civil protests for their own ends. As a left-wing extremist organisation, the IL joins popular protest movements and, as the only left-wing extremist group of this size to date, devises a variety of strategies for dealing with the housing problem in Berlin. It also distances itself from other left-wing extremist "anti-gentrification movements" by criticising their behaviour.

To counter increases in rent prices, the IL Berlin calls for the housing stock of profit-oriented real estate owners to be expropriated. It calls for this to happen by means of targeted interference in and regulation of the market, a policy of expropriation on the part of the State, and the "democratic autonomous administration of housing". However, the IL's central aim is to make the population question the market economy and ultimately the political system. The IL argues that all of the problems in the property market are caused by the "capitalist state", which is the main obstacle on the path to a free society.

Alongside the propagation of their ideology, another aim of left-wing extremists is to **use social media** to desensitise broad sections of society to violent forms of action. To achieve this, they use and exploit both media with an exclusively left-wing extremist bent, and non-extremist media.

Its perceived anonymity, the opportunity it provides to disseminate messages rapidly, and the large number of users, mean that the Internet plays a major role in shaping public opinion. Violence-oriented left-wing extremists in particular have a number of tactics that they use regularly to try to influence the interpretation of events following measures by the State, such as those due to violent riots during demonstrations. For example, violent demonstration participants and offenders are presented as victims of "state repression".

These "victims" are deployed not only in left-wing extremist media, but also in high-profile non-extremist media, in discussions of a supposedly disproportionate reaction on the part of state bodies. In fact, left-wing extremists succeed time and again in reaching a large audience for their left-wing extremist argumentation and ideology through conventional media such as newspapers and television.

Until it was banned by the Federal Ministry of the Interior in August 2017, the online platform [linksunten.indymedia](https://www.linksunten.indymedia.org/) was part of the left-wing extremist media used. This platform was the most important vehicle for violence-oriented left-wing extremism in Germany. Following the ban, there was a marked increase in left-wing extremist posts on other websites. For example, there have been regular posts with clear left-wing extremist content on the online platform [de.indymedia](https://www.de.indymedia.org/), a platform used by left-wing extremists, since [linksunten.indymedia](https://www.linksunten.indymedia.org/) was banned. These posts have included incitement to violence and claims of responsibility for left-wing extremist offences. The platform operator frequently fails to remove clear claims of responsibility, and the further incitement to violence that often accompanies these, from the platform.

Left-wing extremist political parties and similar organisations are part of the spectrum of **strictly ideological left-wing extremists**. Their ideology and politics are principally based on the theories of early communist thinkers such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Strictly ideological left-wing extremists deploy constitutional means, in

particular participation in parliamentary elections, as a way to dismantle the democratic constitutional state and establish a socialist and, proceeding from that, a "classless" communist society.

The orthodox communist Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (DKP, German Communist Party), which has approximately 2,850 members, remains committed to its goal of achieving socialism and communism, taking the tenets of Marx, Engels and Lenin as its guide. The DKP is still gripped by an internal dispute on the future ideological focus and strategy of the party, which has led to the loss of numerous members since 2017. The left-wing faction within the party, proponents of a strict return to the true teachings of Marxist-Leninist theory, has dominated since 2013.

The Marxistisch-Leninistische Partei Deutschlands (MLPD, Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany), which follows strict Maoist-Stalinist principles, stands for "overthrowing capitalist exploitation and oppression" in order to establish socialism as a transitional stage to a classless communist society. Its ideology is based on classic Marxist-Leninist writings in combination with the ideas of Mao Zedong. The MLPD has for years been in strikingly good financial shape. It draws income from a disproportionately large amount of donated money, which according to the party is in the high six-figure range. Given the amount of annual membership fees, its membership can be estimated to be considerably higher than previously assumed, with at least 2,800 members.

The aim of the Trotskyist Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP, Socialist Equality Party) is the "abolition of the class-based society and man's exploitation of man" to create a "new (communist) society around the world". The SGP strictly follows the Trotskyist theory of a socialist revolution as an ongoing process led by workers' associations ("permanent revolution").

Strictly ideological left-wing extremists do not currently have effective stand-alone structures, neither are they relevant in federal political terms. However, their comprehensive analyses of current events give them the potential to act as "spiritual arsonists", providing ideological inspiration including to violence-oriented groups.

Islamism/Islamist terrorism

The Islamist extremist scene has undergone a shift of forces towards the violent and/or jihadist field over the last years. Inter alia, the number of terrorist attacks committed or foiled in Germany between 2016 and 2018 is indicative of this trend.

Following in the field of Islamist terrorism/Islamist extremism¹		
Organisations	2017	2018
Salafi movements	10.800	11.300
Islamic State (IS) 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	950	1.050
Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (HAMAS) ²	320	320
Turkish Hezbollah (TH)	400	400
Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT)	350	350
Muslim Brotherhood (MB) / Deutsche Muslimische Gemeinschaft e.V. (DMG)	1.040	1.040
Tablighi Jama'at (TJ)	650	650
Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg e.V. (IZH)	no hard numbers	no hard numbers
Millî Görüş movement and affiliated associations (IGMG)	10.000	10.000
Furkan Gemeinschaft ⁴	-	290
Others ⁵	1.300	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 only served as a safe haven to them, i.e. they have not undertaken any terrorist activities here.
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 The "Furkan Gemeinschaft" (Furkan Community) was declared an official BfV intelligence target in 2018.
5 Other organisations whose membership figures / figures of adherents are to be taken into account as regards the Islamist extremist following.

Considering nothing but the hard numbers, one can say that the Islamist extremist following increased slightly to a total of 26,560 individuals in 2018 (2017: 25,810).

While no Islamist extremist attack was staged in Germany in 2018, the detection of a number of attack plans in various stages of preparation has shown that there is no reason to give the all-clear. The threat situation in Germany remains tense; it has stabilised on a high level. Nonetheless, besides the military defeats ISIL has suffered in Syria and in Iraq, the comprehensive measures taken by the security authorities have also proven effective.

Germany continues to be a target of jihadist organisations such as ISIL or al-Qaeda. Consequently, Germany as well as German interests in various regions in the world are facing a **constantly serious threat**, which may any time manifest itself in terrorist attacks motivated by jihadism.

Preventing attacks will remain the BfV's top priority in cooperation with the German security authorities and partners abroad.

Potential Islamist extremist attackers have put a focus on symbolic and/or "soft" targets, which are easy to access.

The majority of attacks committed in Germany and in Europe over the last years were staged by lone perpetrators or micro groups "inspired" or controlled by an organisation. Still, it cannot be ruled out that complex attacks such as the ones launched in Paris on 13 November 2015 might be staged.

Most of the lone perpetrators inspired by jihadist ideology came from among the jihadist sympathisers and supporters in the Western countries. This was mainly due to the strength of ISIL and its propaganda, both of which had been on the rise for some time. However, lone perpetrators do not act in total isolation. When planning and preparing their attacks, they usually receive support and advice from members of terrorist organisations abroad.

The successful investigations conducted by the security authorities throughout Germany added to the fact that a large number of attack plans motivated by Islamist extremism were uncovered or foiled at an early stage in 2018, with the BfV being involved in detecting them. An

arrest in Cologne (North Rhine-Westphalia) in June 2018 revealed the **first case of a jihadist-motivated production of biological weapons in Germany.**

Besides other arrests, in 2018 a number of individuals were given final sentences i.a. because of membership of a terrorist organisation. There also were several cases of Islamist extremists being deported i.a. pursuant to section 58a of the German Residence Act.

Islamist terrorism remains a worldwide phenomenon. After the virtually complete military defeat ISIL has suffered in Syria and in Iraq, the organisation has changed from a state-like actor back to a terrorist group operating underground. It 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 two global jihadist organisations, each of which claims the exclusive right to exist, continue to rely on a network of local or regional jihadist groupings. Often supporting the "brand" rather than the actual organisation, these groupings introduce the global jihadist ideology into local conflicts. This in turn adds to the core organisation's radius of action and thus to its influence and attractiveness.

The civil war in Syria and in Iraq has played a central role for German and European jihadists for several years. Since 2012, more than 1,050 individuals have tried to leave Germany for Syria or Iraq.

After the military defeats and the resulting dramatic loss of territory ISIL has suffered in Syria and in Iraq, the utopia of a "caliphate" has finally lost its attraction. Since 2015, the number of departures for Syria and Iraq motivated by jihadism has significantly diminished. In 2018, hardly any departures were determined. Only a very small number of such departures, if any, will have to be expected in future. While the idea of departing for Syria or Iraq in order to live in and fight for the "real" Islamic rule was key to the jihadist scene for many years, it has now lost its paramount significance.

There currently is no other suitable theatre of jihad with a vacuum of state authority, a Muslim population living in supposed or actual oppression, and being of importance as regards the history of Islam as well as being relatively easy to reach.

While departures – or attempts to depart – for other conflict zones have been sporadically determined, no general development of departures matching the former destinations of Afghanistan and Pakistan (2009 to 2011) or let alone of Syria and Iraq (2013 to 2016) is within view for the time being.

One case that stood out was that of a German and Moroccan citizen who committed a suicide attack on a military checkpoint in the Philippines in late July 2018, killing 15 people. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack.

The unstable situation in large parts of the Middle East and Africa has caused ongoing migration towards Europe. It is still possible that there are fighters among the people arriving here, with these fighters coming to Germany in the guise of refugees and having committed war crimes in the conflict areas. Another threat is that refugees might become radicalised by Islamist extremism, either by joining the existing Islamist extremist structures in our country or through self-radicalisation on the Internet. In this context, the security agencies have closely and constructively been cooperating with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).

Despite the decline and fall of the ISIL "caliphate", its scene of sympathisers and followers in Germany and other Western countries continues to exist. For the time being, there is no way of telling what course it will adopt regarding topics, fields of action, or theatres of jihad.

This becomes particularly apparent on the Internet. **Having survived the end of the "caliphate", ISIL's ideology still exists** in the form of jihadist propaganda consumed and disseminated by a large scene of sympathisers. The greater part of this propaganda is unofficial content spread by ISIL sympathisers in a decentralised way. After a period of keeping a low profile, the scene in Germany has resumed its activity, especially on the messenger service Telegram. The enormous threat

potential, which characterises the entire jihadist online propaganda, remains at a high level. Again and again there are calls for attacks to be staged particularly in Western countries.

The Islamist extremist scene in Germany continues to be strongly marked by the Salafi and jihadist following. Still, other Islamist extremist movements, some of which have a large number of followers, play an important role too. This includes both **groupings ready to use violence** such as the Lebanese Hezbollah or the Palestinian HAMAS, which use Germany as a safe haven, and legalist organisations such as the "Deutsche Muslimische Gemeinschaft e.V." (DMG) close to the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), which want to achieve a long-term change in society. Another movement belonging to the legalist spectrum in Islamist extremism is the "Furkan Gemeinschaft", which has its roots in Turkey and which the BfV declared an official intelligence target in the period under review.

The Salafi and, even more so, the jihadist scene in Germany are currently presenting an ambivalent picture alternating between their insistence on their ideology and a certain disorientation. The scene is currently lacking the essential factors that might trigger considerable dynamics like they used to do in previous years, such as charismatic influencers, topics promoting identification, and fields of action fuelling mobilisation.

During the period under review, the number of **Salafists** continued to increase, be it more slowly than before; it has meanwhile reached 11,300 individuals (2017: 10,800). The trend observed within the scene of a withdrawal into private surroundings has continued. There were hardly any public activities such as large-scale events or proselytizing campaigns in the streets.

Many fighters and their families have left the areas of conflict in Syria and in Iraq. Approximately one-third of the individuals who left Germany have returned. Yet, no "wave of returns" has been observed so far. Many individuals continue to stay in the region, i.a. because they are imprisoned there.

In the medium term, **returnees** as the "veterans of the caliphate" may trigger a new dynamism within the Salafi scene in Germany. In this context, special emphasis will have to be on jihadist families, where

children and adolescents grow up internalising the Salafi/jihadist view of the world (jihadist socialisation).

Islamist extremist radicalisation in prisons is a relevant topic not only for the courts, but also for the security agencies. This is especially true since, due to the numerous trials having taken place in the recent past, the number of individuals in prison and released later on will grow. This is why the cooperation between the courts and the German domestic intelligence services in this field has been intensified, and partly institutionalised, over the last years.

To reintegrate into society any people released from prison will be a central task requiring a holistic effort. The security agencies will newly assess the threat each of the released individuals may pose. This will include an assessment of their development and their contacts during their time in prison as well as their possibly resuming contacts with their former Islamist extremist scene or with other European fighters.

Anti-Semitism is not only a topic of agitation of right-wing and left-wing extremists, but also an essential element of the Islamist extremist ideology. The BfV identified a large number of anti-Semitic incidents in 2018 too. BfV intelligence shows that all of the Islamist extremist organisations operating in Germany follow anti-Semitic ideas, which they spread in various ways. These ideas are a serious challenge to peaceful and tolerant living together in Germany.

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

Due to a drop in the number of separatists in 2018, the following in the field of organisations of foreigners posing a threat to security other than Islamist extremist organisations fell slightly to a total of 30,350 individuals (2017: 30,550).

Like in the previous year, most of them – 18,050 individuals, to be precise – were members of left-wing extremist groups of foreigners, while 11,000 people belonged to right-wing extremist groups of foreigners. The separatist groups of foreigners comprised 1,300 members in 2018.

Following of extremist organisations of foreigners^{1,2} (excluding Islamist extremism)		
	2017	2018
Left-wing extremists	18,050	18,050
including:		
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	14,500	14,500
Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C)	650	650
Turkish Communist Party / Marxists-Leninists (TKP/ML)	1,300	1,300
Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLKP)	600	600
Others	1,000	1,000
Separatists	1,500	1,300
Right-wing extremists	11,000	11,000
Total	30,550	30,350
<p>1 Figures refer to Germany; they are partly estimated and rounded off. 2 Figures also include the following of groups which have been banned.</p>		

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 adherents living in Germany are given politico-strategical guidelines

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

Like in the previous years, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party – Front (DHKP-C), and the Ülkücü movement continue to be of particular relevance to Germany's internal security: PKK because of its violent actions it undertook also in Germany in the past, DHKP-C for its overt commitment to armed struggle in Turkey, which is aimed at destroying the Turkish order of the state by replacing it with a new socialist one, and finally the Ülkücü movement due to its racist ideology.

In Germany, **PKK** continues to be the most powerful extremist organisation of foreigners with the largest membership figure of 14,500 members. According to a judgment pronounced by the Federal Court of Justice (BGH), the PKK structures in Europe, and therefore in Germany too, are not autonomously organised (sub-)associations. They depend on the foreign main organisation of PKK when it comes to making decisions. First, the (sub-)associations are seamlessly incorporated into the PKK structure, and second, their political and ideological objectives as well as the latter's implementation are set by PKK's leadership and are binding to its structures abroad. The PKK structures' ability to take autonomous decisions therefore is very limited, namely by the directives set by PKK.

The activities undertaken by the organisation in 2018 were considerably determined by the Turkish military offensive against Afrin in the Kurdish settlement area in Northern Syria (operation "Olive Branch"). In response, **numerous demonstrations – occasionally including violent action** – were held throughout Germany. The ongoing military conflict with the Turkish security forces continues to be a dominant topic within the organisation.

Despite decreasing numbers of participants towards the end of the period under review, the large number of protests carried out in early 2018 once again underlined PKK's considerable ability to mobilise people. The organisation still is in a position to mobilise individuals far beyond its own circle of followers.

Beyond that, the number and intensity of demonstrations held during the period under review were determined by the parliamentary and presidential elections brought forward in Turkey, by the ban on PKK symbols further specified by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI), and by the increasing concern about the health of the organisation's imprisoned founder Abdullah Öcalan.

As early as at the beginning of the period under review, the demonstrations and actions against the Turkish military offensive in Afrin jointly held by PKK followers and German left-wing extremists emphasized the organisation's connections both with the strictly ideological and with the violence-oriented German left-wing extremist spectrum. This cooperation, which we had already observed before, became particularly apparent throughout 2018. Another example of this is the visit of the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Germany from 27 to 29 September 2018. A broad spectrum of protesters including non-extremist organisations as well as several PKK organisations and groupings from the German left-wing extremist scene had already formed in the run-up to the visit.

Although peaceful events and activities continue to prevail in Europe, the use of violence remains a strategic option of PKK's ideology. PKK has the ability to use violence in Germany at least in isolated cases if the organisation considers it necessary to do so. Moreover, it tends to at least tolerate acts of violence staged by its young followers.

The Marxist-Leninist organisation **DHKP-C**, while sticking to the armed struggle in Turkey, did not undertake any significant militant or terrorist activity during the period under review. It can be assumed that this is due to the security situation in Turkey, which has been aggravating since the attempted military coup of 2016 and which has entailed comprehensive police measures, including DHKP-C members being arrested and their premises searched.

Germany all the more remains indispensable to DHKP-C as a **so-called rear area for the armed struggle**. The interest that its followers living in Germany have shown in the commemoration events held for attackers having died in Turkey, who the organisation considers martyrs, shows that its followers support the party line, including its terrorist option.

Germany and Europe thus remain a basis for DHKP-C to recruit potential attackers.

One essential part of DHKP-C's propaganda activity in Germany is to support its "revolutionary prisoners". This includes functionaries imprisoned in Germany such as DHKP-C's Europe leader, who on 6 February 2019 was sentenced to six years and nine months' imprisonment by the Senate for State Security of the Hamburg Higher Regional Court on the grounds of his membership of a terrorist organisation abroad.

Organising concerts of the music band "Grup Yorum", which has been classified as belonging to DHKP-C, remains another focus of the organisation's activity in Germany. While DHKP-C managed to stage several smaller concerts during the period under review, there was no large-scale performance in a concert hall or in a stadium.

The Turkish right-wing extremist **Ülkücü** ideology is mainly represented in Germany through the umbrella organisation "Federation of Associations of Turkish Democratic Idealists in Germany regd. assoc." (ADÜTDF). In addition, there are several other structures and non-organised followers. While the umbrella organisation tries 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 majority of **Ülkücü** followers were satisfied with the results of the parliamentary and presidential elections held in Turkey on 24 June 2018, in which Erdoğan was re-elected to the office of state president. Besides, the electoral alliance between his Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Turkish ADÜTDF parent party, the "Nationalist Movement Party" (MHP), achieved the absolute majority in the Turkish parliament. Although many **Ülkücü** followers had a critical attitude towards this alliance, most of them approved of the centralisation of tasks of the head of state and government in the office of state president, which was decided on as early as in April 2017 and which includes a number of new powers.

According to what they consider an overall positive political development in Turkey, the organised followers of the **Ülkücü** movement decided not to participate in their own name in actions relating to the Turkish military

intervention. Their aim in particular was to avoid a negative impression that might have been created through staging potential acts of violence. Ülkücü followers rather tried to politically profit from the attacks and acts of violence carried out by their political opponent, in particular by PKK and its followers in Germany.

Clashes between rival extremist groups from Turkey, particularly in the context of demonstrations, are a threat to Germany's internal security. Spontaneous violent clashes triggered by the situation may still occur at any time. This is especially true for PKK followers and nationalist or right-wing extremist individuals of Turkish ethnicity, even though the scale of the violent clashes between these two camps continued to wane during the period under review. This development might be due to the Ülkücü followers' increased satisfaction with the political situation in their home country or with a potential moderation imposed on them by their associations to avoid negative external visibility.

Espionage and other intelligence activities

The threat posed to Germany by espionage, influence and other activities by intelligence services tended to worsen in 2018. International relations are increasingly characterised by competition for geopolitical dominance. Many countries use their intelligence services to gain a political, military, economic or technological advantage. In addition to classic espionage and intelligence operations, such countries use their intelligence services to threaten the lives and well-being of targeted persons. Evidence of such action is provided by attacks in some European countries which were prevented and assassinations which came to light in which foreign intelligence services were implicated. Cases of suspected state-sponsored terrorism in which foreign intelligence services play a central role constitute an additional threat which must be taken very seriously.

Germany continues to be of interest to foreign intelligence services as an important geopolitical player, a member of NATO and the EU, an economic power and location for innovative research. The consequences for Germany range from a weakening of its negotiating position to major material and economic damage and a potential impairment of its national sovereignty. Oppositional groups from foreign intelligence services' home countries in Germany are another target of espionage activities.

To collect information, the use of human sources, cyber attacks and other technical means is of prime importance. Apart from being used for espionage, cyber attacks can also be used for sabotage. However, the major part of all intelligence operations carried out in 2018 presumably served to obtain information.

Germany's intelligence and counter-intelligence efforts are directed at all illegal intelligence activities and do not target any specific country or group of countries. However, the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey are currently the main countries engaged in espionage activities focused on Germany.

As **Russia's** relations with many Western countries have cooled, intelligence gathering has become more important. For years, the Russian

intelligence services have invested a great deal of organisational and financial effort to engage in espionage activities against Germany. The use of cyberspace has increased the extent of espionage many times over. Russia is focused on politics, business and industry, research and technology, and the military. It is especially interested in possible negotiating positions of Germany and the West and in what kind of political or economic steps they might take in response to Russian moves. In 2018, additional specific intelligence targets were the tense relationship between the EU and Turkey and the resulting potential impact on the accession negotiations and the future of the EU – in particular after the so-called BREXIT vote – and the orientation of the Common Foreign and Security policy.

Russia's relations with the EU and NATO suffered not only due to the Ukraine conflict and the resulting sanctions, but also because of the poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter with a Novichok nerve agent in the United Kingdom in March 2018. The EU's political and economic sanctions remain in force.

As regards German home affairs policy, the services tried to gather information on party-political structures and developments, on the views of individual political parties and on the potential impact of electoral outcomes.

Apart from their espionage interests, the Russian services strive to influence political and public opinion in Germany. One way to do this is by disseminating pro-Russian propaganda and disinformation through a variety of channels. Important tools include social networks, state-funded and private institutes (such as think-tanks), influential individuals and Russian state media. Television, radio and Internet channels broadcast worldwide intentionally spread narratives favourable to the Russian leadership. These activities are also intended to weaken the Federal Republic's position, for example its support for continuing the EU's sanctions against Russia.

The Russian government is expanding its media offerings in Germany in order to increase its influence. State enterprises are disguised as independent media to hide the fact that they belong to the Russian state

and to exert subtle influence on the public. The most important of these are the Internet channel RT Deutsch and the Sputnik news agency.

The intelligence services of the Russian Federation make extensive use of cyber attacks to gain information and occasionally to spread disinformation and propaganda. Cyber spying by Russian intelligence services i.a. targets government entities, parliaments and politicians, businesses and media companies as well as scientific and research institutions. It continues to be a major threat to German security and a constant challenge to counter-intelligence. This way of collecting information is increasingly becoming important to the Russian services with them making increasing use of attack methods difficult to elucidate.

The focus of **Chinese intelligence activities** is shifting towards political espionage. Chinese intelligence services are now making great efforts to obtain information about supranational entities such as the EU and about international conferences such as the G20 summit. Moreover, the country is very interested in policy positions on China, e.g. recognition as a market economy or territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

Intelligence targets continue to be business and industry, research, technology and the military. The same applies to the popular movements which the Chinese authorities call the "Five Poisons",⁴ fearing that they threaten national unity and the Communist Party's monopoly on power.

In 2018, China continued 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", which is aimed at making China a global leader among the industrialised nations. With this in mind, certain sectors and innovative technologies are targeted for support (including new energy sources and engines, medical technology, industrial robotics, information technologies and space and aviation technology).

The export of German high-tech can harm the German economy in the long run. Nor can it be ruled out that China, by acquiring security-relevant German businesses, might obtain sensitive data and information which it could use to the detriment of German security interests.

⁴ The movements which Chinese authorities call the "Five Poisons" include the independence movement of the Uyghur and Tibetan ethnic minorities, the anti-regime Falun Gong movement, the democracy movement and proponents of sovereignty for the island of Taiwan.

The Chinese are increasingly attempting to exert political influence abroad. In late 2017, China's President Xi Jinping announced the start of a "new era" in which China would move closer to centre stage and become a global leader. He said that the "China dream" would come true with the help of strategic master plans such as "Made in China 2025" and the "New Silk Road" project. The Chinese leadership has promoted the latter, also known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), since autumn 2013. The project is intended to open land and sea routes connecting China, Africa and Europe; it was recently extended to include the Arctic and Latin America. It has also assumed a security policy dimension.

The Chinese believe it is necessary to ensure a favourable political environment for the project to succeed, so they are engaged in massive attempts to extend Beijing's global influence on politics, business, research and society. Governmental, semi-governmental and private Chinese 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.

The increase in Chinese cyber attacks noted in 2017 continued in 2018. Meanwhile attacks and attack vectors have improved in quality, which means that attacks have become more difficult to detect. This development in the methods and techniques used by Chinese APT cyber attackers, in combination with a high level of resources, means a growing threat which is also more difficult to identify.

As in the past, the **Iranian intelligence services** continue to spy on and suppress opposition movements at home and abroad. In addition, the services gather political, industrial and scientific intelligence in Western countries. The main organisation behind activities targeting Germany continues to be the Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS). The Quds Force, a special intelligence unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, is also 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 government is interested in information

on the future policy of the West – for example Germany's foreign and security policy.

On 16 January 2018, executive measures involving ten suspected agents of the Quds Force were carried out by the federal and state police in seven federal states, based on intelligence gathered by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV). The measures were based on several investigations by the Federal Public Prosecutor General (GBA) of these persons on suspicion of acting as agents for an intelligence service. The suspects are thought to have investigated (pro-) Israeli and (pro-) Jewish targets in Germany. The investigations are ongoing.

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 an organisation opposed to the Iranian regime. The Iranian diplomat is thought to have recruited a Belgian husband and wife of Iranian origin as agents to carry out the bombing. The German judicial authorities extradited the suspect to Belgium in early October 2018. The GBA's investigation in Germany continues, as does the investigation in Belgium.

Compared to the previous year, the BfV found even fewer indications of Iranian attempts to acquire proliferation-sensitive material for its nuclear programme. Such indications arise whenever the methodical approach to the procurement of goods that are also suitable for use in the context of a nuclear programme and/or available intelligence on the final recipient or the inquiring organisation suggest that there is a potentially proliferation-relevant background to the procurement. As far as it was possible to verify such indications, they did not reveal any violation of the restrictions under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The BfV is still trying to determine whether this trend continues and whether Iran consistently complies with the agreement concluded in July 2015.

The amount of evidence found for attempts to acquire proliferation-sensitive material for missile technology/the missile programme, which is not covered by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, remained in 2018 at the same high level of previous years.

The BfV has established cyber attacks of suspected Iranian origin since 2014 and continued to do so in 2018. The intelligence gained and publicly available information on Iranian cyber campaigns reveal that Iran has global intelligence interests. It primarily attacks targets in public administration and government, science and research, dissidents and opposition groups, human rights organisations and industry, with a focus on space and aviation, armaments and petrochemicals. The countries subjected to the largest number of attacks are the ones that have been traditional political opponents of Iran (Israel, the Gulf states and the USA). However, recent years have shown substantial evidence suggesting cyber attacks on German research institutions and businesses.

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 or are thought to oppose the current Turkish government. The MIT is very interested in bringing such persons back to Turkey, as demonstrated by their removal, usually conducted in cooperation with the host country's responsible authorities. In isolated cases, such removals are probably conducted by the MIT without the knowledge of the host country and thus constitute kidnapping of alleged members of the Gülen movement abroad to return them to Turkey.

The MIT also targets its activities at 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 political opinion and decision-making in all of German society. Organisations more or less strongly tied to the government and governing party in 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 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 development towards a presidential system in Turkey and the country's difficult economic situation. Turkey will also continue to exert "soft power" influence on the Turkish community in Germany.

Cyber attacks have become a standard espionage tool for many intelligence services in recent years. Such **cyber espionage** poses a serious threat to potential and actual victims. The rapid development of information and communications technology offers a wide variety of opportunities to acquire data illegally for the purposes of espionage and political disinformation, and to manipulate data and sabotage computer systems. Cyber attacks carried out by means of and against IT infrastructures have become an important tool of foreign intelligence services. They can be used to intercept sensitive information and strategies as well as to sabotage critical infrastructures, for example.

The frequency and targets of attacks clearly indicate the attempt to strategically spy on policy-makers and the federal administration. Information-gathering campaigns initiated and controlled by intelligence services also severely threaten the success and development opportunities of German companies and research institutes. Because they are globally competitive and innovative, they face a broad range of threats as foreign countries and their intelligence services seek in a variety of ways to gather information and know-how or to deliberately disrupt economic workflows to benefit their own businesses and industry. Still, extremists and terrorists also target companies.

Protecting German companies against such threats is the shared responsibility of government and industry. This is why the BfV continues to participate in the **Economic Security Initiative**, a forum for cooperation among security authorities and industry coordinated by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community. This alliance is in an ongoing dialogue with those responsible for security in the industry associations and their member companies to prevent attacks against German industry.

Security of classified information and counter-sabotage

Law on the security of classified information creates the personnel and physical conditions to ensure that unauthorized persons do not gain access to information which must be kept secret in the public interest (classified information). The Act on Security Vetting (Sicherheitsüberprüfungsgesetz, SÜG) ensures that only persons who are reliable and loyal to Germany's constitution, the Basic Law, and who are not subject to any specific threat, may have access to classified information (**personnel security**). The Act on Security Vetting also governs technical and organisational measures to protect classified information (**physical security**). Further, persons considered a security risk are not allowed to work in a security-sensitive position in a vital or defence-essential facility. Making sure this is enforced is the task of **preventive personnel protection against sabotage**.

Under section 3 (2), first sentence, nos. 1, 2 and 4 of the Federal Act on the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesverfassungsschutzgesetz, BVerfSchG) in conjunction with section 3 (2) of the Act on Security Vetting, the German domestic intelligence service (BfV) is required by law to participate in security clearance checks of people at the federal level. As a result, the BfV is responsible for taking the necessary measures in connection with security checks on behalf of the competent bodies (e.g. public authorities, other federal public agencies or political parties under Article 21 of the Basic Law [Grundgesetz, GG]). In 2018, 5,056 baseline security vettings, 23,753 enhanced security vettings and 2,435 developed security vettings including background investigations were carried out in connection with the security of classified information. Another 7,106 vettings were done in connection with counter-sabotage, along with 6,283 updated security vettings.

The BfV assesses whether the outcome of each security vetting is security-relevant. A security risk is deemed to exist where there is factual evidence which raises doubts as to the concerned person's reliability in the performance of tasks of a sensitive nature; whether they pose a specific risk, especially fears as to their susceptibility to blackmail if they were to be approached by agent spotters or foreign intelligence recruiters,

organisations as defined in sections 129 to 129b of the German Criminal Code (Strafgesetzbuch, StGB) or extremist organisations; as well as doubts as to their loyalty to the free democratic order as defined in the Basic Law or their willingness to defend that order at all times. The competent agency is informed of the outcome of the security vetting, based on which the agency is then responsible for deciding whether that person is to be entrusted with the envisaged tasks of a sensitive nature.

The amendment of the Act on Security Vetting in 2017 raised the standard of security vetting at federal level. The expansion of vetting measures means that, when participating in security vetting, the BfV now has access to much more data, for example through Internet searches and standard queries as to whether criminal proceedings are pending. The amendments to the Act also introduced new and better standards for updating and repeating security vetting at fixed intervals.

In addition to these tasks, the BfV also **trains the security officers and officers responsible for protection against sabotage** in government agencies, thereby helping to ensure consistent security standards and the availability of in-house contact persons for the staff of government agencies.

The Scientology Organisation (SO)

Again in 2018, the Scientology Organisation (SO) did not come closer to achieving its objective of establishing a "scientologist society" in Germany. Membership in Germany dropped slightly during the reporting year to about 3,400 persons, and the number of high-profile public activities remained low.

The SO continues to be guided by the writings of its founder, L. Ron Hubbard, which make clear that a society based on Scientology teachings **would not guarantee essential fundamental and human rights**. Scientology aspires to bring about a society without general and fair elections and rejects the democratic order. In the long term, the organisation seeks to replace democracy with its own set of laws. In its messages to the public, however, it is anxious to present itself as an apolitical religious community that abides by the rules of democracy. For this purpose, it runs several campaigns for alleged social programmes and relief organisations. For example,

- the association Say No to Drugs, Say Yes to Life aims at raising awareness of drug addiction and prevention, in particular among young people.
- NARCONON is a counselling service for drug addicts.
- CRIMINON offers assistance for criminal offenders.
- Applied Scholastics is a study programme for school pupils and university students.
- In its guide, "The Way to Happiness", the SO gives its answers to questions of daily life, and the International Way to Happiness Foundation offers courses for this purpose.
- The Youth for Human Rights initiative aims at teaching young people worldwide about human rights.

It uses social media on the **Internet** to enhance its image and recruit new members. The SO offers a host of multimedia services that are especially targeted at young people. It continues to push free online courses from the "Scientology Handbook" as a way to attract prospective subscribers

for the expensive SO offerings. Online courses supposedly teach participants efficient control and performance-enhancing mechanisms. Most of these websites deliberately conceal their connection to the SO.

After years of preparation, on 9 September 2018 the SO opened an **impressive new centre ("ideale Org")** in Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg. To realise this project, the SO had collected large sums of money from its members in a massive fund-raising campaign that lasted several years. With this "ideale Org", the SO appears to be continuing its strategy of opening high-profile centres to exert influence in cities of political and economic significance. The SO now has three "ideale Orgs" in Germany: in addition to the one in Stuttgart, one was opened in Berlin in 2007 and another in Hamburg in 2012.

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