



Federal Ministry  
of the Interior

# Brief summary 2016 Report on the Protection of the Constitution

Facts and Trends



**Brief summary**

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## Politically motivated crime<sup>1</sup>

In 2016, the BKA registered 41,549 offences in the category of politically motivated crime, an increase of 6.6% over the previous year (2015: 38,981). This figure includes 13,923 propaganda offences (33.5%; 2015: 13,687 or 35.1%). The total number of politically motivated crimes includes violent offences, the number of which slightly fell from 4,402 in 2015 to 4,311 in 2016. In 30,958 criminal offences (74.5%) an extremist background was found (2015: 29,681 or 76.1%). Of these, 691 (2015: 604) could not be assigned to any specific category.

The following aspects should be noted:

- The number of violent right-wing extremist crimes with a xenophobic background rose once again; the percentage of violent criminal offences against accommodation centres for asylum applicants remained at the high level of 2015.
- After the dramatic rise in 2015, the number of violent left-wing extremist crimes declined gradually towards the level of 2014.
- The number of extremist offences by foreigners significantly increased, including a very strong increase in the number of violent offences.

Specifically:

In the area of **right-wing politically motivated crime**, 22,471 criminal offences were classified as having an extremist background (2015: 21,933). With 1,600 (2015: 1,408) registered cases, the number of violent criminal offences with a right-wing extremist background increased by 13.6%. At 1,190, the number of violent crimes directed at foreigners (2015: 918) was the highest since the current definition of politically motivated crime was introduced in 2001. The number of violent crimes against actual or supposed left-wing extremists (250; 2015: 252) remained about the same. The number of violent offences against other political opponents fell significantly (34; 2015: 82). In 2016, there was one homicide and 18 attempted homicides motivated by right-wing extremism (2015: eight attempted homicides).

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<sup>1</sup> The figures are based on data supplied by the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA).

In 2016, 5,230 criminal offences were classified as left-wing politically motivated crimes with an extremist background (2015: 5,620), of which 1,201 were violent crimes (2015: 1,608). The number of violent criminal offences with a left-wing extremist background that were directed against the police and security authorities significantly decreased to 687 (2015: 1,032) and is gradually returning to the level of 2014. The number of violent criminal offences against actual or supposed right-wing extremists also decreased to 542 (2015: 833). In the category „Violent criminal offences against the State, its institutions and symbols“ the trend is the same with a total of 432 (2015: 572) registered offences in 2016. The number of violent crimes in the context of campaigns against restructuring more than tripled in 2016 (2015: 54, 2016: 188) In 2016, there were six attempted homicides motivated by left-wing extremism (2015: eight).

In the area of **politically motivated crime by foreigners**, 2,566 offences with an extremist background were registered (2015: 1,524), including 427 violent offences (2015: 235). The total number of criminal offences in this category thus increased by 68.4%, the number of violent crimes even by 81.7%. In 2016, there were two homicides and 13 attempted homicides by foreigners with an extremist background (2015: three).

## Right-wing extremism

By the end of 2016, the number of right-wing extremist sympathizers totalled 23,100, after subtracting multiple memberships (2015: 22,600). About one-quarter of all right-wing extremists are neo-Nazis; the size of the neo-Nazi scene (about 5,800 persons) did not change compared to the previous year. The number of subculture-oriented right-wing extremists rose slightly in 2016 to 8,500 (2015: 8,200). Subculture-oriented right-wing extremists continued to make up the largest share of right-wing extremist sympathizers, at more than 35%.

<b>Right-wing extremist following<sup>1</sup></b>		
	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Subculture-oriented right-wing extremists</b>	8,200	8,500
<b>Neo-Nazis</b>	5,800	5,800
<b>Political party membership</b>	6,650	6,550
Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD, National-Democratic Party of Germany)	5,200	5,000
DIE RECHTE (The Right)	650	700
Bürgerbewegung pro NRW <sup>2</sup> (pro NRW, Civic Movement for North Rhine-Westphalia)	500	500
Der III. Weg (The Third Way)	300	350
<b>Other right-wing extremist organisations<sup>3</sup></b>	3,200	3,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,850</b>	<b>24,350</b>
<b>after subtracting multiple memberships</b>	<b>22,600</b>	<b>23,100</b>
<b>of which violence-oriented right-wing extremists</b>	<b>11,800</b>	<b>12,100</b>

1 Some of these figures are estimated and rounded off.  
2 In late 2015, pro Köln, the Civic Movement for Cologne, split off from pro NRW. Its members are included in the number of members of other right-wing extremist organisations.  
3 This group includes 500 to 600 *Reichsbürger* (citizens of the Reich) and *Selbstverwalter* (sovereigns), which are considered right-wing extremists, as well as 300 members of the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (Identitarian Movement Germany, IBD).



At 1,600, the number of violent offences motivated by right-wing extremism rose once again in 2016 compared to the previous year (1,408). Together with the increasing number of violence-oriented right-wing extremists (2015: 11,800, 2016: 12,100), this clearly illustrates the threat posed by this spectrum. More than half of all right-wing extremists can be considered violence-oriented.

The development of right-wing extremist violence is essentially characterized by the following aspects:

- The willingness to use violence against (supposed) foreigners is becoming more common across Germany. This also includes attacks on facilities for asylum seekers with the attackers willingly accepting that persons might get injured.
- Right-wing extremists also increasingly target people such as local decision-makers and other government representatives whom they consider responsible for perceived grievances or the high number of asylum seekers in Germany.

As **violent offences motivated by right-wing extremism have increased**, in particular against foreigners and asylum seekers, so has the intensity of violence. In particular when it comes to offences against facilities for asylum seekers, persons without a right-wing extremist background participate as well, which means that anti-asylum radicalization is taking place also beyond the organized right-wing extremist scene.

In 2016, 907 offences motivated by right wing-extremism (2015: 894) were committed in connection with or targeting facilities for asylum seekers, including 153 violent crimes (2015: 153). Most of these offences were arson attacks (65; 2015: 75). The recorded offences thus remained at a high level, although their number decreased over the course of the year. Overall – also beyond 2016 – the offences mainly targeted accommodation facilities. However, there were also attacks on persons, or injuring persons was at least willingly accepted.

Although many right-wing extremist violent crimes are committed outside relevant structures and hierarchies, in some regions right-wing extremist groups have formed which purposely attack foreigners, political

opponents or government representatives. Groups such as the Oldschool Society (OSS) or the *Gruppe Freital* (Freital Group) have occasionally translated their aggressive rhetoric into concrete plans or actual criminal and violent acts of terrorist dimensions. More right-wing terrorist structures might emerge.

In addition to anti-asylum agitation, **Islamophobia** is another key field of agitation of right-wing extremists. In order to fuel their fantasies of resistance and revolution, right-wing extremists constantly try to exploit events that they directly or indirectly associate with the religion of Islam. They stereotypically claim a dichotomy and incompatibility between the German and Muslim cultures, insinuating that Muslims are waging a (cultural) war of conquest against the West and behaving in a violent and warlike manner. They rarely distinguish between integrated Muslims and Islamists (e.g. Salafists).

Especially the events in Cologne (North Rhine-Westphalia) on New Year's Eve 2015/2016 as well as the attacks in Würzburg and Ansbach (both Bavaria) in summer 2016 and in Berlin in December 2016 have further strengthened anti-immigrant sentiments (particularly targeted at Muslims) in the right-wing extremist scene. Moreover, right-wing extremists regularly draw attention to offences committed by migrants against Germans but also against other migrants and use these examples to underpin their xenophobic and anti-Muslim ideology.

In the right-wing extremist worldview, politicians as representatives of the democratic system are relevant enemies. The situation has become even more acute due to the growing right-wing extremist anti-asylum agitation. Right-wing extremists are well aware that they will not be easily able to stop the Federal Government's asylum policy as such but that they can significantly interfere with its local implementation. In this context, local government officials play a key role in ensuring an effective refugee policy. Right-wing extremists try to intimidate them by insulting and threatening them, damaging their property or even attacking them physically.

The seeming anonymity of the **Internet** makes people more likely to express radical views and disregard common courtesy. Current topics, espe-

cially asylum and immigration, are discussed very emotionally and sometimes with an intensity that may cross the boundaries of legality. These contributions („hate posts“) include threats, coercion, disparagement, extremist material and overt incitement to criminal and violent offences. Violent and hateful speech can create a climate where the threshold for violence is becoming ever lower.

Currently, the **right-wing extremist political parties** in Germany lack charismatic and energetic leadership to rally their supporters and protest voters or to influence the process of shaping public opinion and policies. The Federal Constitutional Court has found that the far-right Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) would not be able to successfully achieve its goals and to pose a genuine threat, and this holds true even more for the much smaller right-wing extremist parties pro NRW, DIE RECHTE (The Right) and Der III. Weg (The Third Way). However, it should be noted that these parties may not always seriously intend to participate in the democratic parliamentary system but prefer to pursue their unconstitutional goals within structures that cannot be banned.

The series of defeats of the **NPD** in five federal state elections in 2016, including the loss of their last parliamentary group in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, has greatly weakened the party. Ultimately, at the end of a short period of consolidation under party chairman Frank Franz elected in late 2014 the party has declined in importance and membership. Instead of the expected boost from a modern and more professional image, by the end of 2016 the NPD faced strategic helplessness and a very limited ability to act and to rally supporters. On 17 January 2017, the Federal Constitutional Court rejected the Bundesrat's attempt of 1 December 2013 to ban the party. The court found that the NPD advocates a strategy aimed at abolishing the existing free democratic basic order and acts in a systematic manner and with sufficient intensity towards achieving its aims that are directed against the constitutional order. However, the court rejected a ban under Art. 21 (2) of the Basic Law, saying there was a lack of specific and weighty indications to suggest that this endeavour would be successful. For the court, it appears to be entirely impossible that the NPD will succeed in achieving its aims by parliamentary or extra-parliamentary democratic means. Furthermore, the court found no weighty indica-

tions suggesting that the NPD exceeded the boundaries of admissible political struggle of opinions. Nor was it possible to establish that the NPD undermined the freedom of participating in the development of political opinions, e.g. by violent means or by creating an atmosphere of fear.

In 2016, the party **Die RECHTE** (The Right) was able to stabilize the number of its members and had regional units in 13 federal states. It is still trying to fulfil the formal requirements to become an official political party under the Political Parties Act. For example, the regional units in Saxony-Anhalt and Baden-Württemberg participated in the respective state elections on 13 March 2016. The party's activities continue to focus on the racist, xenophobic and anti-Muslim anti-asylum agitation which has gradually shifted from protests against existing or planned facilities for asylum seekers to other topics such as foreigners' crimes („rapefugees“) and integration costs.

The party **Der III. Weg** (The Third Way) is increasingly using the problems and challenges posed by the refugee situation to spread propaganda against asylum seekers as their primary enemies but also against perceived „elites“ (politicians and media). Der III. Weg continues to claim that it is „no party like any other“ and considers itself in uncompromising opposition to the „system of the Federal Republic of Germany“.

The **Bürgerbewegung pro NRW** or just **pro NRW** (Civic Movement for North Rhine-Westphalia) continues to be absorbed in internal disputes, in particular about the party chairman Markus Beisicht. Pro NRW has intensified its co-operation with right-wing extremists from various groups although in the past the party frequently distanced itself from such people to prove its alleged non-extremist intentions.

## Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter

*Reichsbürger* („citizens of the Reich“) and *Selbstverwalter* („sovereigns“) comprise groups and individuals who, for various reasons, deny the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany and reject its legal system. They invoke the German Reich of history, for example, espouse conspiracy theorist lines of thinking or apply a self-defined law of nature. They refuse to accept the legitimacy of democratically elected representatives and claim that the legal system does not apply to them; as a consequence, they are often prepared to violate the law.

Only a small number in this scene can be categorized as right-wing extremists. Nevertheless, seen overall it is a subversive movement whose threat potential has perceptibly increased.

Some 10,000 people across Germany were classed as belonging to the *Reichsbürger* and *Selbstverwalter* scene in 2016; only 500 to 600 of these were right-wing extremists. Since *Reichsbürger* and *Selbstverwalter* are a new, separate phenomenon within the extremist scene, it is not possible to provide reliable numbers as the nationwide survey of active members and followers has not yet been completed.

The increased **anti-political and subversive agitation** which members of the *Reichsbürger* movement engaged in mainly via social networks in 2016 also had an impact on the overall spectrum. Calls to „resist“ the state and its representatives gathered momentum, and the willingness to use violence increased.

The heterogeneous *Reichsbürger* scene primarily uses the Internet, especially social networks, for networking purposes. This enables propaganda to be widely distributed without the need for fixed structures. It is in particular those groups which have formed since late 2015 which engage in significant activity.

In 2016 *Reichsbürger* and *Selbstverwalter* attempted to intimidate numerous employees in public authorities and sometimes even politicians by filing claims in the millions of euros. The claims referred to fictitious debts owed by the person to whom they were addressed. These debts were then entered in an online register of debtors kept in the United

States of America based on the provisions of the US Uniform Commercial Code (UCC), known as the „UCC Register“. Neither proof of any debt nor any underlying loss is required to make an entry in this register. These claims were then assigned to a debt collection company domiciled in Malta which was established specifically for this purpose. So far, however, no cases are known in which a statement of claim or a European Payment Order has been sent from Malta and served on any officials in Germany.

Further, *Reichsbürger* and *Selbstverwalter* increasingly sought to influence or ridicule police officers and judges by seriously hampering them in the exercise of their official duties or verbally abusing them. Numerous videos have been posted on the Internet in which the movement „records“ these activities and exploits them for propaganda purposes.

In the period under review the sometimes **considerable potential for violence** in the *Reichsbürger* movement was primarily directed against court bailiffs and police officers. Police operations were described as „attacks“ in the face of which it was necessary to act in self-defence. Due to a predilection for weapons among members of the movement, court bailiffs and police authorities again and again had to call in special forces when enforcing measures.

The number of violent activities by *Reichsbürger* and *Selbstverwalter* has increased considerably over the past year. Any form of state intervention – especially the withdrawal of firearms licences – is likely to give rise to a considerable amount of aggression and dangerous situations.

*Reichsbürger* committed serious acts of violence in Reuden in Saxony-Anhalt and in Georgensgmünd in Bavaria in the course of 2016. Several police officers were injured, and one officer was killed.



## Left-wing extremism

In 2016 the number of active left-wing extremists (after subtracting multiple memberships) rose by just under seven per cent to a total of 28,500 (2015: 26,700), the highest level since 2012.

The biggest increase of more than 10 per cent was in the group of violent left-wing extremists: In 2016 the number of violence-oriented left-wing extremists totalled 8,500 (2015: 7,700), including 6,800 autonomists (2015: 6,300, an increase of around 8 per cent).

Membership of Marxist–Leninist and other legalist left-wing extremist groups rose by some seven per cent to 21,800 (2015: 20,300).

<b>Left-wing extremist following<sup>1</sup></b>		
	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Autonomists</b>	6,300	6,800
<b>Anarchists</b>	800	800
<b>Marxist–Leninists and other left-wing extremists</b>	20,300	21,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,400</b>	<b>29,400</b>
<b>after subtracting multiple memberships</b>	<b>26,700</b>	<b>28,500</b>
<b>of which violence-oriented left-wing extremists</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>8,500</b>

1 Some of these figures are estimated and rounded off.

The number of left-wing extremist motivated acts of violence dropped in 2016 compared to the previous year (2016: 1,201; 2015: 1,608). However, this cannot obscure the fact that the level of acceptance and intensity of violence in the left-wing extremist scene has markedly increased in recent years. This is particularly true of the level of violence directed against the police and political opponents (especially actual or purported right-wing extremists). Members of the scene are prepared to use violence ranging from property damage to bodily harm, even attempted homicide (2016: six offences compared to eight in 2015).

Violence-oriented left-wing extremists regard violence as a „means of one’s own liberation“ and a mode of expressing one’s own identity and „rage at existing conditions“, i.e. „capitalism“. They use great brutality, including against people, in an attempt to underscore their demands, to escalate situations and force decision-makers to change their behaviour.

The main perpetrators of left-wing extremist violence are **autonomists**, who have continued to grow in number. Their level of activity and aggression has also increased. This is most evident in violent assaults against real or purported right-wing extremists as well as attacks against the police. Autonomists use violence as a form of militancy on the street and as part of clandestine activities (especially arson attacks and daubing walls with paint). However, they will also not stop at using physical violence and are even willing to accept that their victims will suffer the most serious of injuries.

As well as a number of incidents involving damage to property owned by political parties standing in regional elections in Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania as well as elections for the Berlin House of Representatives, the number of violent attacks carried out in connection with the topic of „anti-gentrification“ increased. The majority of these instances of left-wing extremist motivated acts of violence, namely 151 out of a total of 188, occurred in Berlin. Special mention should be made of activities around the topic of „Rigaer Straße 94“, a matter of great importance in the left-wing extremist scene.

Properties co-opted by members of the scene such as the autonomous housing project „Rigaer Straße 94“ are regarded as important structures for resistance which carry great symbolic weight, free of all „capitalist exploitation logic“ and especially free of surveillance and state influence. These properties are used in an attempt to override the state’s monopoly on power. The reaction to any impending loss of „free spaces“ is generally an extremely aggressive one. In June 2016, for instance, violent clashes erupted when the owners of the property at „**Rigaer Straße 94**“ tried to enforce building measures which then needed to be secured by the police. Left-wing extremists regarded this as an attack against their „au-



onomous free space“ and launched a string of protests which were to begin on „Day X“. In February 2016 what was known as the „Day X“ strategy was published in the Berlin scene detailing possible reactions to the forthcoming clearance of properties belonging to the left-wing extremist scene. Slogans such as „Every Eviction Comes At A Price“ and „1 Million Property Damage“ were posted on the left-wing extremist Internet platform „linksunten.indymedia“. These slogans were used to call on supporters to cause damage to property, for instance by setting fire to cars, smashing windows or the like.

Protests against the building work at „Rigaer Straße 94“, which was felt to be tantamount to eviction, extended well beyond Berlin. Across Germany autonomous structures were responsible for arson attacks, for example against „flash cars“ or damage to property owned by the „causers/profiteers of expulsion“ and of the „apparatus of repression“.

Some 3,500 people took part in a demonstration held in Berlin on 9 July 2016, the motto of which was „Defend Rigaer 94! Crush the Investors' Dreams!“ From the outset participants lit fireworks and threw stones and bottles at police officers. The police continued to come under attack even after the demonstration had ended. A total of 123 police officers were injured.

One key feature of left-wing extremist agitation continues to be the **forging of alliances and campaign work** (notably in connection with large-scale events). The strategic objective is to establish as broad a social alliance as possible which reaches beyond the extremist spectrum and is firmly rooted in regional and local structures. Another element is networking at international level. From a tactical perspective, acting in large groups of people also enables violence-oriented left-wing extremists to take part in riots incognito.

Two larger campaigns dominated the left-wing extremist scene in 2016: The „Nationalismus ist keine Alternative“ (NIKA, Nationalism is No Alternative) campaign was in particular directed against the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD, Alternative for Germany) party; the „End of the Road“ campaign was used to protest against lignite open-cast mining in the Lower Lausitz region and the Rhineland. In late 2016 a third campaign

was launched against the G20 Summit which will take place in Hamburg on 7/8 July 2017.

Activists involved in the NIKA campaign declared the AfD to be their „top enemies“. This led to numerous cases of property damage as well as to attacks against people in this target group.

The „End of the Road“ campaign – mainly against lignite open-cast mining in the Lower Lausitz region – again proved to have great pulling power in 2016. The tried and tested strategy applied by the action alliances, namely combining non-extremist and extremist structures around a campaign theme which provides effective publicity, was equally as successful as efforts to mobilize followers in various spectra to provide a platform for violent activities too.

From the violent left-wing extremist scene’s perspective, the G20 Summit will focus protests against representatives of the „capitalist system“ whom they feel the need to fight against. Left-wing extremists regard urban spaces as convenient places for activities such as occupations, blockades and street riots. They launched a „militant supporting campaign“ against this meeting of the heads of state and government of the world’s 20 leading industrialized and newly industrializing countries. „Mass blockades“ and „civil disobedience activities“ against the G20 Summit are being planned for 7 July 2017. Supporters are called to take part in a large-scale demonstration in Hamburg on 8 July 2017.

Even though there were no big nationwide protests in 2016, the campaigns described in the above prove just how many followers and supporters the left-wing extremist scene is capable of mobilizing. Ultimately, there were no specific occasions which could be charged with emotion for large-scale nationwide protests in 2016 – and that is one of the reasons why the number of criminal and violent acts dropped year on year. This situation will likely change in view of the G20 Summit which is set to take place in Hamburg in 2017. Experience shows that an increase in left-wing extremist motivated criminal and violent acts is to be expected in connection with the political debate around the elections to the German Bundestag in autumn 2017.

Overall, the left-wing extremist scene was still unable to instrumentalize more positive fields of action for their own ends, that is „anti-fascism“, „anti-racism“ and „anti-gentrification“. No significant progress was made in 2016 in regard to plans to establish left-wing extremist structures capable of any form of intervention. Some alliances disbanded or are no longer active.

Left-wing extremists use the **Internet**, social media in particular, to inform and emotionalize members of the scene and sympathizers in a timely manner and to get them to engage in action. The Internet also serves to disseminate propaganda, coordinate campaigns and win new supporters.

Only few left-wing extremist websites are of any significance beyond their local, regional or ideological context. To raise their profile, left-wing extremists have therefore for years been stepping up their use of independent Internet platforms such as „linksunten.indymedia“ in addition to the use of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. The platform has become the most important medium used by violence-oriented left-wing extremists. For years it provided a forum for by and large uncritical reports about left-wing extremist agitation and criminal offences. In addition, „linksunten.indymedia“ is again and again used to „out“ actual or purported right-wing extremists, often resulting in criminal offences being committed against them. The platform is now the most frequently used forum in which violence-oriented left-wing extremists publish self-incriminatory letters.

## Islamism/Islamist terrorism

A growing tendency towards violence and/or a shift towards jihadism can be observed within the Islamist scene. This development was i.a. illustrated by the terrorist attacks in Germany in 2016, by the successful ones as well as by those that were uncovered and prevented.

On the one hand, the following of groups not oriented towards violence declined. Most notably, there was a significant decrease in members and adherents of the associations classified as part of the Millî Görüş movement. One reason might be the reform process within the „Islamic Community of Millî Görüş, regd. assoc.“ (IGMG) that leads the association towards a more moderate line and a diminished affinity to extremism. Accordingly, the members of the organisation in their entirety are no longer to be classified as belonging to the extremist scene.

On the other hand, a further rise in the numbers of increasingly violence-prone and/or jihadist Salafists was observed.

The following table illustrates this development:

<b>Islamist following<sup>1</sup></b>		
<b>Organisations<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Salafist movements</b>	8,350	9,700
Islamic State (IS) Core al-Qaeda Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Al-Shabab Jabhat Fath al-Sham (JFS)	no hard numbers	no hard numbers
Hezbollah <sup>2</sup>	950	950
Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (HAMAS) <sup>2</sup>	300	320
Turkish Hezbollah (TH)	360	400
Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT)	320	320
Muslim Brotherhood (MB)/Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland e.V. (IGD)	1,040	1,040
Tablighi Jama'at (TJ)	650	650

<b>Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg e.V. (IZH)</b>	no hard numbers	no hard numbers
<b>Millî Görüş movement and affiliated associations</b>	no hard numbers	10,000
<b>Others<sup>3</sup></b>	1,950	1,045
<p>1 The figures refer to Germany and are partly estimated and rounded off.                  2 Hezbollah and HAMAS are considered terrorist organisations by the international community; however, they have used Germany merely as a safe haven so far, and thus have not developed any terrorist activities here.                  3 Other organisations whose membership/adherent figures are relevant to the Islamist following.</p>		

On the whole, the Islamist following in 2016 amounted to approximately 24,400 individuals.

Although this total number is smaller than in the previous years, the threat situation has not at all eased. On the contrary: the shift towards a violence-oriented/terrorist spectrum has revealed a new dimension of the Islamist scene, which was also illustrated by the attacks carried out in Germany in 2016.

Despite extensive intelligence collection measures taken by the security agencies, Germany was faced with several terrorist attacks with an Islamist background in 2016:

- 26 February 2016: knife attack against a member of the Federal Police (Lower Saxony)
- 16 April 2016: explosion in a house of prayer of the Sikh community in Essen (North Rhine-Westphalia)
- 18 July 2016: axe attack against fellow travellers on board of a regional train near Würzburg (Bavaria)
- 24 July 2016: explosion in the immediate vicinity of a music festival in Ansbach (Bavaria)
- 19 December 2016: truck attack against a Christmas fair in Berlin.

The attack in Berlin on 19 December 2016, claiming twelve lives and injuring more than 50 individuals, has been the most serious Islamistically motivated terrorist attack carried out in Germany so far.

The attacks have substantiated the **IS threat scenario in Germany**. IS can be held responsible for all attacks mounted in Germany in 2016.

Germany is the focus of Islamist terrorism. Terrorist incidents are possible in Germany at any time in the future.

This is why the prevention of Islamist-terrorist attacks will remain the primary aim of the BfV in co-operation with the German security authorities and foreign partners. The arrests of terrorist suspects in Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saxony and Berlin are positive examples of this successful co-operation.

Germany was not the only country affected by Islamistically motivated attacks in 2016. Suicide attackers committed several attacks in Brussels (Belgium) on 22 March 2016 killing 32 people. On 14 July 2016, an attacker drove a truck into a crowd of people in Nizza (France) and killed 86 individuals. IS claimed responsibility for the attacks in Brussels and Nizza.

The early detection and prevention of activities of self-radicalised, fanatical lone perpetrators/micro groups acting independently of larger organisations is a challenge to security agencies all over Europe.

All attacks carried out in Germany in 2016 can be classified as part of the **phenomenon of the individual jihad**, which means that they were committed by lone perpetrators or micro groups.

The lone perpetrators/micro groups act on their own and without being tasked, even if their attacks are staged in the interest of an Islamist-terrorist group. The use of everyday consumer goods to carry out the act is typical of this kind of attack.

Adolescents in particular radicalise themselves in a quick and long-lasting way and develop a readiness to consequently obey the order to kill unbelievers. Young people are particularly susceptible to **jihadist propaganda**, especially spread via social media.

Jihadist propaganda ignores language barriers as well as national borders and enables jihadism to find supporters also in the West.

Members of terrorist organisations possibly entering Europe under cover as part of the migration movement as well as returnees from combat ar-

areas in Syria and Iraq posing an incalculable, possibly long-term threat also remain the focus of the security authorities.

By the end of 2016, intelligence was available on more than 890 individuals (2015: 780) having travelled towards Syria/Iraq in order to participate in combat there on behalf of IS and other terrorist groups, or in order to support such groups in other ways. Thus, the number of Islamistically motivated departures remained comparatively low in 2016, like in 2015. Possible reasons are the successful military operations in the fight against IS, along with the violence, brutality and despotism marking life in the Caliphate in Syria and Iraq. Increased monitoring of the Turkish-Syrian border is another factor making it almost impossible for Islamists from the West to enter Syria.

However, **Salafism** in Germany enjoys undiminished popularity. Its continuous attractiveness shows the importance of Salafism being subject to a debate in society as a whole and of intelligence collection carried out by the community of the German domestic intelligence services. This is even more significant as adherents of the jihadist tendency of Salafism not only reject the West – symbolised by the free democratic basic order – but also actively fight against it: either by travelling to so-called jihad areas or by mounting attacks in the West.

There are indications that a growing number of individuals from the margin of Salafism are recruited for jihadist activities in Syria and Iraq. In this regard, special mention is to be made of the radicalising influence of Salafist propaganda.

On 25 October 2016, the Federal Minister of the Interior issued a decree banning and dissolving the association **Die Wahre Religion (DWR, The True Religion)** and the affiliated **Koran distribution campaign LIES! (READ!)**. The DWR had used seminars, public events, and the Koran distribution campaign in pedestrian precincts to spread its messages hostile to the German constitution as well as to the idea of international understanding.



This ban is not an isolated measure but takes its place in a series of bans imposed on Salafist associations, e.g. Millatu Ibrahim (2012), DawaFFM (2013), IS (2014), and Tauhid Germany (2015).

**Anti-Semitism** is a constitutive element of the ideology of the whole Islamist spectrum. In view of the liability to prosecution, Islamist organisations often refrain from overt anti-Semitic propaganda. On the Internet, however, anti-Semitism is an integral part of the Islamist ideology propagated all over the world. An essential feature of Islamist anti-Semitism is the anti-Jewish „world conspiracy theory“. Jews are considered the masterminds of a worldwide conspiracy and held responsible for a variety of evils and injustices.



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

The number of members and adherents of non-Islamist organisations of foreigners posing a threat to security as well as of non-Islamist extremist organisations of foreigners rose in 2016 as a result of the growing number of right-wing extremists of Turkish origin, and currently amounts to a total of 30,050 individuals.

The largest part, i.e. 17,550 individuals, belonged to left-wing extremist groups of foreigners, while 11,000 individuals were affiliated to right-wing extremist groups of foreigners and 1,500 individuals had to be considered members or adherents of violence-oriented separatist groups of foreigners.

<b>Members and adherents of extremist organisations of foreigners<sup>1, 2</sup> (excluding Islamism)</b>		
	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Left-wing extremists</b>	<b>17,550</b>	<b>17,550</b>
<b>including:</b>		
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	14,000	14,000
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
<b>Violence-oriented separatists</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,500</b>
<b>including:</b>		
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)	1,000	1,000
Extremist Sikhs	500	500
<b>Right-wing extremists</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>11,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,050</b>	<b>30,050</b>

1 Figures refer to Germany; they are partly estimated and rounded.  
2 Figures also include members / sympathisers of the groups which have been banned.

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, the 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.

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: the PKK because of its violent actions committed in particular by young adherents, the DHKP-C because of its overt commitment to the armed struggle in Turkey, and the Ülkücü movement because of its militant denial of the principle of equality. **The attempted coup in Turkey on 15 July 2016** and the subsequent repressive measures taken by the Turkish government had more or less far-reaching effects on all of these groups. As a result, the number of attacks staged against Turkish facilities in Germany grew as did the number of demonstrations and rallies held in Germany by the respective parties which have a large overall potential of mobilisation.

In 2016, the **PKK** was preoccupied with the continuously aggravating, civil war-like clashes in its „home region“, and with the repressive measures the Turkish government had taken against the PKK and organisations or political parties close to it. Initially, the PKK in Germany reacted to the failed coup in Turkey in a rather restrained way, considering it a primarily „inner-Turkish“ conflict it was not going to participate in. The PKK was rather concerned about the physical condition and security of its imprisoned leader Abdullah Öcalan which it considered to be seriously threatened due to the measures taken by the Turkish government following the attempted coup. However, the combat actions of the Turkish military directed against the PKK and its guerrilla units, which had already been intensified since the beginning of the year, were often met by the PKK with direct retaliatory acts causing a further aggravation of the conflict.

The world continues to feel deep sympathy for the Kurds because of their suffering from the civil war in Syria and from the unstable situation in

Iraq. This leads to an improvement of the PKK's reputation, as it is considered the defender of the Kurds' lives (quite often, no attention is paid to the fact that other Kurdish militias participate in the conflict, too). The PKK's armed struggle and several terrorist attacks in Turkey, its at least indifferent attitude as regards militancy and violence in Europe, in particular its continuous recruitment activities for the guerrilla, as well as its intransparent decision-making processes and lack of pluralism disappear from view, though. The PKK exploits its improved reputation to vehemently call for the ban imposed on its activities in Germany to be lifted. The organisation wants to free itself from the stigma of a banned organisation, and in doing so, meets with support from the left-wing extremist spectrum.

The PKK still is the largest extremist organisation of foreigners in Germany in terms of membership and efficiency. The current critical situation in Turkey including civil war-like clashes in the Kurdish settlement areas and the current unlikelihood of the peace process being resumed will probably continue to affect the security situation in Germany.

The situation in the region has considerably **emotionalised the PKK adherents in Germany**. Tensions between PKK adherents and nationalist/right-wing extremist Turks continue to be serious. The numerous rallies held in Germany in response to the tightened security situation in Turkey include a permanent potential for violent confrontations. The respective political opponent considers such rallies a provocation, which might emotionalise both sides even more in the future and lead to violent clashes. Current events in Turkey repeatedly lead to spontaneous or planned clashes of adherents of both sides in Germany. As long as the tensions in Turkey do not ease off, this situation will most likely continue in Germany.

The PKK in Europe has changed its name several times over the past years, with the intention of giving the outward impression of political and democratic re-orientation and getting rid of the stigma of being a terrorist organisation. Despite numerous announcements of the intention to introduce internal democratic structures, the organisation still adheres to its authoritarian leadership style with a cadre system. Demo-

cratic approaches, such as involving its grassroots members into decisions, have not resulted in any relevant structural or personnel changes so far.

According to the Federal Court of Justice (BGH), the PKK structures in Europe, and thus in Germany, are neither independently organised associations nor are their objectives developed independently from their foreign mother organisation PKK. On the one hand, they merge into the PKK structure, and on the other, their politico-ideological objectives as well as the ways of achieving them are laid down by the PKK senior leadership, which makes them binding for the organisation's structures in other countries. Their own sphere of responsibility and freedom of decision-making is thus very small and limited to the framework of these directives.

Though largely peaceful events prevail in Europe, violence remains an option of the PKK ideology. This is i.a. illustrated by its recruitment for the guerrilla units carried out in Germany. The PKK continues to be able and prepared, if necessary, to use violence in Germany at least in isolated cases or to tolerate acts of violence carried out by its young adherents.

In 2016, the **DHKP-C** continued its series of attacks staged against government institutions and the police in Turkey, to a much smaller extent than in the previous year though, because of the increased security measures taken in the wake of the attempted coup. However, it still propagates the necessity of terrorist violence in Turkey. Though the DHKP-C considers Germany a safe haven, the organisational units in our country support the party line including the terrorist option in Turkey. The DHKP-C in Germany suffered a severe blow when its **European leader was arrested in Hamburg on 2 December 2016.**

The nationalist and/or racist right-wing extremist **Ülkücü** ideology based on an idealisation of Turkey and of being Turkish by simultaneously denigrating other ethnic groups is mainly represented in Germany by the umbrella organisation *Föderation der Türkisch-Demokratischen Idealistenvereine in Deutschland e.V.* (Federation of Associations of Turkish Democratic Idealists in Germany regd. assoc.) and other – non-organised – followers. While the umbrella organisation tries to act in compli-

ance with the law to the outside world, particularly its young followers offensively propagate their racism via the Internet and do not only call for violence but occasionally even stage acts of violence against other ethnic groups. Since 2014, it has been observed that an increasing number of Turkish nationalist rocker groups classified as belonging to the Ülkücü movement pursue politico-ideological intentions in addition to their general criminality.

The often warlike clashes in their home countries provoke an understandably high level of emotionality with many migrants. Extremists try to exploit this for their purposes and instrumentalise rallies. They stir up an aggressive mood that often results in militancy and violence against rival groups or the police. Clashes between these groups – particularly between PKK adherents and right-wing extremist Turks during the period under review – pose a permanent threat to Germany's internal security.

## Espionage and Other Intelligence Activities

States which strive to gain a knowledge edge in military (particularly strategic) or economic and technological contexts do not hesitate to procure the necessary information secretly and illegally by violating applicable law.

Germany is of interest in its role as a geopolitical player, as a member of NATO and the EU and on account of its economic strength and innovative businesses. Oppositional groups in Germany from foreign intelligence services' home countries are another target of espionage activities.

The Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran are the major players behind espionage activities that are directed against Germany. Apart from that, other countries (also from the West) are becoming increasingly important.

Their governments' political agenda dictates the priority areas of the individual intelligence services' activities.

**Russia** advocates the model of a multipolar world. Currently, relations with most EU and NATO countries are severely strained. Moreover, Russia is suffering from the EU's economic sanctions imposed in connection with the Ukraine crisis. The Russian leadership is trying to promote its views on this model and the crises in Ukraine and other regions among the Western public to induce the EU to lift its sanctions.

The Ukraine conflict still significantly drives the activities of Russian intelligence services. Obtaining advance information about the positions of the Federal Government and opposition parties increases Russia's leverage in negotiations and creates opportunities for counter-measures.

In 2016, Russian intelligence activities also focused on the strained relationship between the EU and Turkey, the EU's future after the Brexit vote and the European Policy on Security and Defence. Moreover, Russian intelligence services monitored Europe's stance on Russia's military intervention in Syria.

Since 2014, propaganda and disinformation activities to promote Russian interests and defame the Federal Government's policy have increased in parallel to the growing external policy problems (Crimea crisis, war in

Syria) and the deteriorating economic situation in Russia. Important propaganda and disinformation tools include social networks, the microblogging service Twitter, government-funded and private institutes and Russian state media. TV, radio and online channels worldwide are used for propaganda and disinformation campaigns.

Under the cover of alternative views on „Western“ media coverage, Russian services spread specific narratives. It is not important whether information is true. Information is selected, combined and interpreted depending on the intended message to be communicated to the public as emotionally as possible.

The **Chinese services** have an important role to play when it comes to implementing the Chinese government’s policy guidelines, which are aimed at ensuring territorial integrity and protecting the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) hegemony, at expanding China’s geopolitical and military power and at modernizing China’s national economy. For this reason, the intelligence services’ activities abroad are primarily focused on gathering intelligence about political decision-making processes, on obtaining technological know-how and on the opposition to the system.

Since Xi Jinping came to power in 2013, the intelligence services in China’s authoritarian and repressive political system have constantly gained importance. They have wide-ranging powers, which they use to keep the Communist Party in power.

The focus of Chinese intelligence activities is shifting towards political espionage. They are now trying to obtain more information about supra-national 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 region of the South China Sea.

In Germany, Chinese intelligence services focus on industry, research, technology and the armed forces (structure, armament and training of the Bundeswehr, modern weapons technology) as well as policies which – from the Chinese perspective – threaten national unity and the Communist Party’s monopoly on power („Five Poisons“)<sup>2</sup>.

2 The movements which Chinese authorities call the “Five Poisons” include the ethnic minorities of the Uyghurs and Tibetans seeking autonomy, the anti-regime Falun Gong movement, the democracy movement and proponents of sovereignty for the island of Taiwan.



Chinese intelligence services use social networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook to recruit informants on a large scale. Their approach is almost always the same: Ostensible researchers, recruiters and headhunters contact persons with promising profiles and try to lure them with attractive opportunities. Finally, they invite these persons to China where they are approached by the intelligence services.

The main task of **Iranian intelligence services** is 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 state of Israel, its representatives and supporters as well as members of the Jewish religious community are among the declared enemies of Iran. Even the agreement made between Iran and the Western world to settle the nuclear conflict has not changed this attitude. Therefore, Iranian intelligence-related organisations continue to spy on (pro-)Jewish and Israeli targets in Germany.

According to reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran is complying with the restrictions imposed on its nuclear programme by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed in July 2015. In return, sanctions on Iran have been noticeably loosened since Implementation Day in January 2016.

In 2016, the BfV found significantly less evidence of Iranian attempts to acquire proliferation-sensitive material for its nuclear programme. As far as the BfV was able to verify such evidence, it did not reveal any violation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. 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 about the same.

In our digital age, information-gathering using technical means is gaining increasing importance. However, cyber attacks may be used not only for espionage but also for sabotage purposes. This is a threat in particular with regard to critical infrastructures. However, the growing influence of **digital espionage** has not diminished the importance of human sources. Instead, both forms of espionage complement each other, thus producing an increased threat potential. The potential targets of espionage ac-



tivities therefore need to safeguard their protected property both against attempted attacks from outside and against disloyal employees in their own organisations („insider attacks“) who are recruited, blackmailed or even specifically infiltrated into the organisation by foreign intelligence services.

With the progress of modern technologies of communication and information, the approach of foreign intelligence services has changed. Information can now often be obtained by digital means with a comparatively low risk of discovery. Therefore, cyber attacks have become an important method of espionage, increasing its intensity many times over.

Many attacks originated in Russia and China although there are also other countries whose intelligence services have the necessary resources and capabilities to carry out cyber attacks. For example, cyber attacks can now also be attributed to presumed government agencies in Iran.

The frequency and targets of the attacks clearly prove the attempt to strategically spy out policy-makers and the federal administration. Main targets include the Federal Foreign Office and its diplomatic missions abroad, the Federal Ministry of Finance, and the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy. Attackers also focus on the Federal Chancellery and Bundeswehr offices.

Information-gathering campaigns initiated and controlled by intelligence services also severely threaten the business and development opportunities of German companies which succeed on the global market due to their innovative potential and competitiveness. Foreign countries and their intelligence services try to gather information and expertise in manifold ways in order to achieve competitive advantages for their own economies.

Protecting the private sector from economic espionage, sabotage and other threats is a joint responsibility of government and industry. On 26 April 2016, the BfV together with other security authorities and industry associations launched the **Economic Security Initiative** (*Initiative Wirtschaftsschutz*). Through the initiative coordinated by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, stakeholders can jointly develop and implement measures to improve economic security.

## The Scientology Organisation (SO)

In 2016, the Scientology Organisation (SO) did not make progress toward its goal to establish a Scientologist society in Germany. The number of members in Germany is currently stagnating at about 3,500 persons. The number of high-profile public activities continues to be low. However, the SO persists in setting up information stands in various cities.

The SO adheres to its fundamental ideological orientation and strategy and to its familiar priorities. It continues to be guided by the writings of its founder, L. Ron Hubbard. These writings make clear that a society based on Scientology teachings would not guarantee essential fundamental and human rights.

Scientology aspires to a society without general and fair elections and rejects the democratic legal system. In the long term, the organisation seeks to replace democracy with its own legal code. 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.
- The Youth for Human Rights initiative aims at teaching young people worldwide about human rights.<sup>3</sup>
- Applied Scholastics is a study programme for school pupils and university students.

The SO relies on social networks to polish its image and to recruit new members. It attempts to reach young people directly with a variety of multimedia offerings.

## Notes

2016 REPORT ON THE PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION  
FACTS AND TRENDS

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