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Russia Denies Links to German 'Terror' Groups Amid Dawn Raids

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Russia's embassy in Berlin. **Silviapef (CC BY 2.0)**

The Russian embassy in Berlin on Wednesday denied maintaining links to far-right terror groups in Germany after a Russian woman was among 25 people arrested in a series of police raids over a suspected plot to overthrow the government.

"The Russian Embassy in Germany would like to make clear that Russian diplomatic and consular offices in Germany do not maintain contacts with representatives of terrorist groups or other illegal entities," the Berlin embassy said in a statement that was carried by Russian news agencies.

German prosecutors confirmed the arrest of one Russian woman, whose name was given as Vitalia B in accordance with Germany's strict privacy laws, on suspicion of facilitating attempts to make contact between a terrorist cell and Russian officials, though they added that there was "no indication" that the attempts had been successful.

The Kremlin described the arrests as a "German domestic issue" on Wednesday.

"This is rather an internal problem of Germany. They themselves have stated that there can be no discussion of any kind of Russian intervention," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told journalists.

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The nationwide raids carried out by German police on Wednesday morning led to the arrests of 25 people suspected of belonging to a far-right terror cell plotting to overthrow the government.

Around 3,000 officers including elite anti-terror units took part in the dawn raids on over 130 properties, in what German media described as one of the largest anti-extremist operations in the country's history.

The raids targeted alleged members of the "Reich Citizens" (Reichsbuerger) movement suspected of "having made concrete preparations to violently force their way into the German parliament with a small armed group," according to federal prosecutors.

Those arrested are believed to have formed a terrorist group "which had set itself the goal of overthrowing the existing state order in Germany and replacing it with their own," the prosecutors added.

The Reichsbuerger, a far-right grouping known to have links to anti-Semitic, racist, and neo-Nazi movements, reject the legitimacy of the German Federal Republic and argue that the German Reich remains in existence today.

AFP contributed reporting.

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