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German Spy Agency Opens Hotline for Exiled Russians

By Reuters

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REUTERS / Thilo Schmuelgen

Germany's domestic intelligence agency has established a dedicated hotline for exile groups and political dissidents facing intimidation, surveillance or physical violence from foreign operatives inside the country, with a key focus on threats emanating from Russia alongside countries like Iran and China.

The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) on Thursday published a brochure advertising the hotline for individuals who have sought refuge in Germany from authoritarian governments.

Under the initiative, victims of state-sponsored harassment are encouraged to report incidents to help intelligence analysts identify, map and counter foreign operative networks operating in Europe.

The BfV indicated in the brochure that information provided by affected individuals could directly assist ongoing investigations and potentially help thwart active threats.

"Through both its own investigations and information provided by the individuals concerned, the domestic intelligence service is able to track down those responsible," a section in the 16-page brochure reads.

The hotline's launch comes as Germany seeks to grant intelligence services new powers to hack communications and disrupt the operations of foreign adversaries to counter what officials have described as a growing threat from cyber and hybrid attacks.

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