Iranian spies in Germany targeted Israel embassy, Jewish kindergartens — report

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The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-spies-in-germany-targeted-israel-embassy-jewish-kindergartens-report/>

The German journalist who first reported [raids by local security forces](https://www.timesofisrael.com/germany-hunts-for-iranian-agents-who-reportedly-spied-on-israeli-jewish-targets/) at the homes of suspected Iranian spies across Germany supplied new details Wednesday about the Israeli and Jewish targets allegedly monitored by the suspects.

Josef Hufelschulte, of the weekly German-language magazine FOCUS, told Israeli public broadcaster Kan that the suspected spies had been gathering information on the Israeli embassy in Berlin, as well as on targets related to the local Jewish community, including kindergartens.

The operatives were monitored by German intelligence services for two months before the raids were conducted, Hufelschulte said.

On Tuesday, German authorities said they were conducting searches across the country in connection with 10 suspected Iranian spies, with FOCUS magazine claiming that they were members of an elite military force that had been eyeing Israeli and Jewish targets.

The report said that arrest warrants for the suspects listed them as members of the al-Quds force, which is part of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps and is considered a terrorist organization by the United States.

Later on Tuesday, Kan reported that the Israeli [Mossad intelligence service had provided critical information](https://www.timesofisrael.com/mossad-intelligence-led-to-german-raids-on-iranian-spies-report/) that led to the raids. According to the report, the al-Quds Force had tried to recruit non-Iranian Shiites — primarily those with European citizenship — to establish a terror cell to carry out attacks throughout the continent.

But German prosecutors said authorities searched premises linked to the suspected Iranian spies following an extensive investigation by the country’s domestic intelligence agency.

Israel’s ambassador to Germany, Jeremy Issacharoff, told Kan that “the affair should raise a red flag not only in Germany, but in all of Europe.”

“The time has come for the Germans and the Europeans to understand what is hidden behind the Iranian smile of recent months,” the ambassador added.

A spokesman for the Federal Prosecutors Office said the raids took place early Tuesday at private homes and offices across Germany, but no arrests were made. He said the suspects are believed to have “spied on institutions and persons in Germany on behalf of an entity associated with Iran.”

The spokesman, Stefan Biehl, told The Associated Press that raids were prompted by a tip from Germany’s domestic intelligence service.

He declined to comment on the FOCUS report that the suspects were spying on Israelis and Jews.

FOCUS reported that the searches — including by police special forces — were carried out in Berlin, Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia.

Germany’s Interior Ministry referred questions about the raids to federal prosecutors.

Last month, the German government protested to the Iranian ambassador following the conviction of an Iranian agent for spying. The Pakistani man was [convicted in Berlin](https://www.timesofisrael.com/germany-protests-to-iran-for-spying-on-targets-with-ties-to-israel/) last year of espionage and sentenced to more than four years in prison. His targets included Reinhold Robbe, who headed the German-Israeli Association.

Germany’s Foreign Ministry said the Iranian envoy, Ali Majedi, was summoned just before Christmas and told that “spying on people and institutions with a particular relationship to the state of Israel on German soil is a blatant violation of German law.”