
Germany Blames Russia for Cyber-Attack and Election Interference



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Doha, Dec. 13 — Germany has accused Russia of carrying out a cyber-attack on its air traffic control systems in August 2024 and attempting to interfere in the country's February federal elections, according to a German foreign ministry spokesman. The Russian ambassador was summoned following the allegations.

German authorities said intelligence indicates that Russian military intelligence (GRU) was behind the attack, with the hacker group Fancy Bear identified as the operational actor. Berlin described the actions as part of a disinformation campaign named Storm 1516, targeting key political figures, including Green Party candidate Robert Habeck and CDU candidate Friedrich Merz, now Germany's chancellor. Fake videos alleging ballot manipulation were circulated shortly before the elections.

While communications at Germany's air navigation office were compromised, flight operations were not affected, authorities confirmed. The German government, coordinating with European partners, warned it would take counter-measures to hold Russia accountable for its "hybrid actions."

Russia has categorically denied the accusations, calling them "baseless" and "absurd," and rejecting claims of state involvement in cyber-attacks or election interference.

The announcement comes amid heightened European concern over Russian cyber activity since Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Germany has been a strong supporter of Ukraine, providing military, financial, and diplomatic aid, while Chancellor Merz has repeatedly condemned Russian cyber warfare and called for frozen Russian assets to help protect Kyiv.