

People who are in the public eye due to political or other community activities can become targets of hostility or criminal actions. The following criminal actions are particularly relevant:

- Threats and insults conveyed through e-mail, telephone, anonymous letters, or the internet.
- Property-related crimes such as vandalism to homes or vehicles.
- Crimes against personal integrity, including threats, insults, stalking, and physical assaults.

Please consider the following advice:

Compiling lists or dossiers; exposure of political opponents on the internet

Gathering information about political opponents is not uncommon in the realm of politically motivated crime. Public exposure, i.e. the publication of such data, is a common practice in politically motivated crime. The intention behind it is mainly to spread uncertainty. Public figures, officials, community pressure groups, media organisations and private individuals are increasingly becoming the subject of such practices.

The security forces have currently no evidence that activities that do not go beyond collecting and publishing names put the targeted individual at a specific risk. Only when there are additional findings that suggest an increased risk will police take steps after a case-based risk assessment procedure. This would involve, for example, notifying the targeted person or implementing protective measures to avert potential dangers. The mere fact that an individual, institution or organisation is put on a list somewhere is typically not enough to warrant notification of the individual. A blanket notification would, in fact, play into the perpetrators' hands.

Source: National Crime Agency (BKA)

Public figure - private life:

- Develop a heightened sense of awareness by observing your surroundings, and inform police immediately if you notice anything suspicious.
- Ask family, colleagues, neighbours, child carers etc. to remain vigilant, too.

- Exercise caution when publishing personal information, especially on social networks, and raise awareness among your family members about this matter.
- Whenever possible, park your car in a garage both at home and at work.

Acting in your public capacity:

- Talk through the detailed arrangements for public events with the relevant people. This includes a risk assessment with regard to participants or visitors.
- Get familiar with on-site security measures, including escape routes and the use of security personnel.
- Keep a distance from aggressive or hostile individuals. Remain calm and avoid verbal or non-verbal aggression.

If you receive threatening messages:

- Take every threat seriously and do not comply with any demands made by potential wrongdoers. Always notify police.
- Note that letters and other printed materials may contain forensic evidence. Protect the documents and avoid further handling. Document how the shipment was delivered to you.
- Do not forward threats received via email or instant messenger; wait until the police secure the messages.
- If possible, record threatening phone calls and document the conversation in detail (location or line used, caller's voice, date, time, etc.).
- If you are threatened or insulted online, secure the posts, e.g., by taking screenshots.

If you feel decidedly unsafe:

The North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry of Home Affairs has established a police central point of contact for politically exposed persons - telephone number 0211-871 3131. This one-stop facility can be contacted 24/7 and is part of the State Government's Situation Room.

If you are physically attacked or hindered in the exercise of your public function:

- If threats are made, do not hesitate to call police on the 110 emergency line.
- Actively request assistance from third parties (passers-by etc.). Address them directly, to make them aware of the circumstances and inform the police via the emergency number, 110.
- Seek refuge in public establishments – shops, public transport etc. - and call police immediately on 110.
- Always get the police to bring charges.

“Defensive weapons”:

The police view the use of so-called defensive weapons, such as pepper sprays, with little enthusiasm. If you hesitate or are too slow, it can end badly for you. It is easy for an attacker to take the weapon from you and use it against you. There are legal issues, too. Whilst some weapons covered by the Weapons Act may be carried in public if certain conditions are met, it would be a criminal offence under Section 42 of the Act to bring them to a public event. Scan the QR code below for the NRW Ministry of Home Affairs ‘Weapons Calendar’.



Physical security measures at home and in the workplace:

Security loopholes at the workplace and at home make it easy for criminals. A vulnerability analysis is therefore crucial to identifying opportunities for criminals and determining the proper mechanical or electronic security precautions.

Mechanical security measures should always take precedence. They are essential for effective protection. Extra protection comes from burglary or robbery alarm systems which add to the criminal’s risk of detection.

Security products available on the market is only effective if professionally planned and fitted. The State Crime Authority (*LKA*) is happy to provide advice on accredited private sector operators.

A list of certified products can be obtained from www.polizei-bayern.de > Kriminalität > Vorbeugung > Beratung > Technische Beratung.

Free police advice:

Seek free and unbiased advice from police on recommended security technology. For more details, a list of police advice bureaux and a directory of useful addresses, go to the North Rhine-Westphalia Police website: [polizei.nrw](http://polizei.nrw.de) > Kriminalität > Wohnungseinbruch.

Additional tips on how to effectively protect yourself and your property can be found at www.polizei-beratung.de.

Staying safe on duty in NRW:

This state government campaign - www.sicherimdienst.nrw - provides hands-on advice to its intended target group, namely elected representatives, politicians, civil servants, judges and other government employees working in areas where they often face hostility and aggression.