

#NotYourSource

RSF calls for journalists to be protected against BND surveillance

In the run-up to the adoption of a new law on the foreign surveillance activities of the German foreign intelligence service BND, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is launching the "Not Your Source" campaign to call for an end to the surveillance of foreign journalists. As a result of the [successful constitutional complaint](#) brought by RSF and the Society for Civil Rights (GFF), the German Bundestag has been instructed to create a new legal basis for the intelligence service's work, including tougher provisions to protect confidential communications from state surveillance. The Bundestag's Committee on Internal Affairs is likely to reach a decision on the proposed legislation as early as this March. In RSF's view, the new draft of the BND Act still leaves media workers and their sources vulnerable to surveillance.

"Journalists must no longer be abused by intelligence services as involuntary sources of information of political interest," said Christian Mihr, Executive Director of RSF Germany. "The judgment of the Federal Constitutional Court has clearly shown how intelligence work can be carried out effectively without systematically violating press freedom and fundamental rights. The new BND Act must create safeguards and oversight mechanisms that are proportionate to the vast capabilities of digital surveillance. With an appropriate law, Germany could set an international precedent for human rights instead of heading towards another constitutional complaint with a superficial reform."

RSF recently voiced [strong criticism of the federal government's draft act](#). Although it establishes formal requirements for the protection of confidential communications, at the same time it undermines them by making inadequate provision for their application and oversight. This draft does not shake the foundations of modern mass surveillance, as exposed by Edward Snowden in 2013. Through the unrestricted analysis of traffic data, the BND would likely be able to continue to gather information on the contact networks and interests of media workers on a massive scale and pass it on to other intelligence agencies with no regard for the dangers this entails for media workers in repressive states.

With its ["Not Your Source"](#) campaign starting on February 8, RSF is campaigning for a more comprehensive protection for foreign media workers and their sources against surveillance by intelligence agencies. RSF calls on anyone who supports this cause to join the campaign and call on members of the German Bundestag via social media or email to revise the draft act accordingly.

Germany is ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in RSF's 2020 World Press Freedom Index. For more information about press freedom in Germany, please visit: [www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/deutschland](http://www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/deutschland)