

Germany bans Muslim association for pursuing radical Islamism

FRANKFURT ([Reuters](#)) – Germany's interior ministry said on Wednesday it has banned the association Islamic Centre Hamburg (IZH) and its subsidiary organisations, saying it pursues radical Islamist goals.

The ministry said in a statement that 53 of the organisation's premises had been searched by authorities in eight German states early on Wednesday, acting on a court order.

Extensive evidence from an earlier search of 55 properties conducted in November provided the basis for Wednesday's ban of the IZH, known in German as Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg, said the ministry.

"Today, we banned the Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg, which promotes an Islamist-extremist, totalitarian ideology in Germany," said Interior Minister Nancy Faeser.

The IZH was not available for comment by phone on Wednesday morning, and its website was not accessible to the public.

[On Wednesday morning](#), police officers in balaclavas descended on the Imam Ali mosque, also known as the Blue Mosque, in Hamburg to confiscate cash and a black Audi vehicle.

For months, German security services have been investigating IZH for alleged close links to Iran and the Lebanese group Hezbollah, as well as "pursuing anti-constitutional objectives".



German officers who raided the Blue Mosque wore blue plastic covers on their shoes to avoid damaging the prayer room as they removed evidence in cardboard boxes.

The German tabloid Bild reported that they used axle grinders and chainsaws to gain access to large quantities of coins and other pieces of evidence.

Germany's domestic intelligence service has named Mohammad Hadi Mofatteh, 58, as the head of the IZH and says he reports directly to the Islamic Republic, despite the group styling itself as non-political.

He was previously arrested some months ago at Hamburg airport after a return flight from Tehran carrying "secret letters" he allegedly obtained there, Bild reported.