

Hackers sue German government over NSA spying

February 3 2014, by Frank Jordans

A group of computer hackers and human rights campaigners in Germany announced Monday that they are suing their government for allegedly breaking the law by aiding foreign spies.

The Chaos Computer Club and the International League for Human Rights submitted a criminal complaint to [federal prosecutors](#) claiming that Chancellor Angela Merkel, her government and security officials tolerated and even helped members of the U.S. National Security Agency and Britain's GCHQ to spy on German citizens.

The groups point to documents released by NSA leaker Edward Snowden as evidence that the emails, social media messages and phone calls of ordinary citizens are screened beyond what is allowed under German law.

"With this criminal complaint, we hope to finally initiate investigations by the Federal Prosecutor General against the German government," the Chaos Computer Club said in the statement. The group calls itself Europe's largest association of hackers; it regularly campaigns for greater privacy rights and exposes flaws in electronic security systems.

Federal prosecutors have been considering for months whether to open an investigation of alleged NSA activities. They will now have to consider whether to open an investigation on the basis of the new criminal complaint as well.

While the German government has expressed misgivings about some of the reported allegations and is seeking to negotiate a 'no-spy' agreement with the United States, opposition lawmakers have accused Merkel's administration of failing to put sufficient pressure on Washington for fear of jeopardizing diplomatic relations and intelligence cooperation.

Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert, noted that "everyone in Germany can file a [criminal complaint](#)" and declined to comment on the hackers' suit.

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