



A Bosch corporation building in Germany

## Germany's Bosch Alleged To Aid Iran In Spy Tech Targeting Protestors

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The giant German engineering firm Bosch reportedly aided Iran's security forces in facial recognition technology in 2017 and delivered thousands of street cameras.

The German television outlet ARD on Sunday aired a blockbuster report titled "Iran: Persecution with modern surveillance technology," citing a document obtained by the outlet in Persian showing that at "Khatam University in Tehran in 2017, an instruction course was organized by Bosch security and an Iranian distribution partner." The topics of the instruction course were "facial recognition, face detection, and intelligent tracking from objects."

The instruction teacher was allegedly a distribution director for the Bosch's Middle East division. ARD did not name the director. Iran International sent press queries to Bosch, including the spokesperson responsible for the Middle East.

Bosch told ARD it delivered 8,000 cameras to Iran's regime between 2016-2018. Bosch disputed that its cameras can be used for full facial recognition

and denied that a Bosch employee participated in the instruction course. According to Amnesty International, the regime is expanding its "mass surveillance" targeting street traffic, with a focus on women to ensure they are wearing their compulsory hijab.

Iranian dissidents, whose images were altered to protect their identities, told ARD they seek to sabotage the cameras on the streets to prevent the persecution of protesters. ARD showed images of Bosch cameras and software used to monitor streets and highways.

An Iranian activist told ARD when a camera captures more than 5 or 10 people at a protest an alarm signal is sent to the police and "within minutes" security forces are present.

### **A street camera in Tehran**

In April, Iran International reported that Ahmad-Reza Radan, the chief commander of the Iran's police, **said that his security apparatus** will use advanced technology and equipment to identify women who violate the law requiring females to wear the mandatory hijab in public places. He said women and girls who do not cover their hair in "public places, cars, or commercial centers," will be prosecuted.

The ARD concluded its report with the narrator stating "When women in Iran face a trial in the future it could take place with help of technology from Made in Germany."

It is not clear if Bosch has had any dealings with Iran since the United States re-imposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic in 2018, but Tehran is adept at finding intermediary's to do business with Western companies.

The Iranian-American human rights activist, Lawdan Bazargan, told Iran International "Regrettably, Germany has a long-standing history of supporting the Islamic Regime of Iran (IRI) at the expense of the Iranian people, human rights, and democratic values. The 1980s, known as the Bloody Decade

among Iranians, witnessed Germany maintaining close ties with Iran while remaining silent after the 1988 massacre of political prisoners. “

She said “Taking into account Germany's past experiences and the potential consequences of aiding the IRI in oppressing its people, it appears that Germany's assistance to the IRI is indeed deliberate.”

#### **Lawdan Bazargan speaking to Iran International TV. Undated**

Bazargan, who runs the NGO Alliance Against Islamic Regime of Iran Apologists (AAIRIA), added, “In the mid-2000s Nokia Siemens Network (NSN) went a step further, selling an electronic monitoring and surveillance center to Iran's state-owned telephone company, bolstering this oppressive regime. The system allowed the Iranian government to easily spy on and intercept communications of dissidents heavily reliant on web-based platforms to connect with the outside world. Tragically, the IRI exploited this technology to apprehend protesters during the 2009 Green Movement, subjecting them to horrifying torture and unjust imprisonment based on their chats and text messages.”

Jason Brodsky, policy director for the US-based United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI), told Iran International that the ADR report “is deeply disturbing. It demonstrates the long standing ties between the German business community and the Islamic Republic. And underscores the need for enhanced due diligence of German companies world-wide. Iranian drones are being found with western components.

Brodsky continued “And if Bosch is, wittingly or unwittingly, involved in facial recognition and surveillance technology, then this calls for a robust investigation by Bosch and the German authorities as to what has been done here. Bosch has been a partner in the past with the Islamic Republic.” He added the “German government like to say it is committed to upholding human rights, but German businesses are involved in Iranian markets. The German government has to speak with one voice with the business community. “

**Jason Brodsky, policy director for the US-based United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI)**

Brodsky said that “Bosch was part of a German business delegation visiting Iran in 2016 after the JCPOA. The German government has to be cognizant of it that Iran extracts western technology to advance its repression apparatus at home.”

The **JCPOA is an abbreviation** for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action—the formal name of the Iran nuclear deal reached in 2015.

The Bosch corporation played a key industrial role in advancing the war aims of Nazi Germany. Bosch used an estimated 20,000 slaves, which included 1,200 concentration camp inmates, as part of its efforts to help Hitler win the war.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the associate dean of the LA-based Simon Wiesenthal Center (named after the legendary Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal), told Iran International that “Facial recognition is weaponized by the Iranian regime against women and girls and facial recognition is being facilitated by one of Germany’s legacy companies. Shame on them. And shame on the German government for not putting an end to it. The German government can put an end to it in one second by barring export licenses. “

Cooper asked “Where are the voices of the political parties and NGOs who speak up, first and foremost, for the rights of women?” He warned that the Bosch technology will damage the “**Women, Life, Freedom**” movement.” How many more people will end up in prison tortured and raped by virtue of this technology?”

Cooper noted the implications of Bosch having “not learned or forgotten” the lessons from the Holocaust due to the principle of “export über alles.” The prominent Rabbi said that by “putting on willful blinders so that businesses can maximize profits will come at a pernicious price with dealing with a murderous Iranian regime that threatens all of us.”

Iran International sent press queries to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's spokesman, Steffen Hebestreit, and to Sebastian Fischer, the spokesman for German Foreign Minister, *Annalena Baerbock*.

Baerbock claims to have a "feminist foreign policy" but is facing criticism for allegedly **allowing Iran's "hanging judge" Hossein-Ali Nayeri** to enter Germany for medical care.

Gazelle Sharmahd, the daughter of German businessman **Jamshid Sharmahd, who was sentenced to death** in Iran in February, has told the German media that Scholz and Baerbock are not doing enough to secure her father's freedom.

Bazargan said "Instead of bolstering the IRI, Germany should take a firm stance and sever all ties with Iran, demanding the immediate release of Jamshid Sharmahd, the German citizen held hostage by the Islamic Regime. By doing so, Germany can demonstrate its commitment to human rights and support the aspirations of Iranians striving for freedom and justice."

According to statistics from the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, Germany exported more than \$1.2 billion in merchandise to Iran from January to October 2022.

Traditionally, Germany has been viewed as the weakest Western link in the effort to improve human rights in Iran and end the theocratic state's reported nuclear weapons program. Iran International reported last week about the **controversial twin city partnership** between the German city of Freiburg and Esfahan.

## Iran Protests



Prominent Iranians Dismiss Upcoming Elections, Call For A Referendum



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