

LfD Lower Saxony complains about the use of the police messenger NIMes on private devices

police

The State Commissioner for Data Protection (LfD) Lower Saxony has complained to the Lower Saxony Ministry of the Interior about the police messenger NIMes. The LfD primarily criticizes the fact that the messenger is operated on the police officers' private mobile devices. This "bring your own device" (BYOD) approach entails risks and hazards that the police have so far only countered with inadequate security measures.

"The employer's lack of control over the private devices of the civil servants leads to an unacceptable risk for the operation of this messenger service, which requires a high level of protection," says state data protection officer Barbara Thiel. Personal data up to and including protection level D of the protection level concept of the LfD Niedersachsen is processed in NIMes. This is the second highest level on the 5-point scale, with A to E increasing the severity of the potential harm to those affected. Level D includes data whose improper handling could significantly affect the social position or economic situation of the person concerned.

"Due to the BYOD approach, an unmanageable combination of different devices, operating systems, other software and configurations is in use during operation," criticizes Barbara Thiel. "At the same time, the respective user is responsible for protecting his private end device from malware. This in no way meets the need for protection of the threatened data."

Theoretically, the transmission of text, image, sound and location data can be attacked by malware at any time without the employer or user noticing. In principle, a private end device with NIMes is not much better protected than any conventional smartphone with a halfway up-to-date operating system. Although the police carry out random checks on NIMes users, these do not help either due to the BYOD principle, since private devices are explicitly excluded from this.

"I understand that a messenger makes the work of the police easier," says Barbara Thiel. "In addition, I rate NIMes as more privacy-friendly than a commercial messenger service. The complaint is expressly not directed against the service itself. But the Ministry of the Interior still has to take the decisive step, namely to finally equip the police officers nationwide with official devices. be put on. However, this would presuppose that without exception all civil servants who use NIMes agree to this change to their private property unconditionally.

The LfD Lower Saxony cannot prohibit the police from using NIMes on private mobile devices because they do not have the necessary powers to do so. The Ministry of the Interior has been asked to comment on the complaint that has now been made,

in accordance with the statutory requirements.

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[Protection level concept of the LfD Lower Saxony](#)

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