

Pegasus revelations; deluge in Germany and English 'freedom'

This week's big story delves into the Pegasus project, the work of a consortium of 16 international media organisations exploring how spyware sold by the Israeli surveillance company NSO Group infects smartphones to extract messages, photos and emails, record calls and secretly activates microphones. After analysing a massive data leak containing more than 50,000 phone numbers, the Pegasus project believes the data indicates potential targets that NSO's government clients have identified since 2016 in advance of possible surveillance.

Our reporting team explains how the software works, who wants to use it and why, and reveal how activists, journalists and lawyers worldwide seem to be among those particularly targeted.

Most of this week's edition could have been filled with the findings of this huge investigation, so get up to speed with our overview then visit theguardian.com for more revelations, reaction and analysis. **The big story Page 10 →**

Record rainfall and flooding hit western Germany and Belgium last week, killing hundreds and destroying entire communities. We visited the region where shellshocked residents have been taking stock, and examine the role the climate crisis is playing in extreme weather events. **Spotlight Page 17 →**

England's release from Covid lockdown this week had been billed as "freedom day", but instead the nation seemed increasingly anxious as infection rates soar, while Boris Johnson faced growing criticism, both from outside and within his own party. Political editor Heather Stewart and Jessica Elgot reflect on the problems facing the UK prime minister. **Spotlight Page 20 →**



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On the cover
The Pegasus project reveals how spyware made by the Israeli NSO Group can infiltrate smartphones to eavesdrop on individuals. A mass data leak suggests journalists, political activists and lawyers are among those who may have been targeted by NSO clients.
Illustration: Guardian Design