



A survey by Open Doors Germany

# Lack of protection for religious minorities in Germany

Religiously motivated attacks on 743 Christian  
refugees in German refugee shelters



**OpenDoors**

Im Dienst der verfolgten **Christen** weltweit

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# 1 Introduction

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“We have underestimated the role of religion.” These were the words of Germany’s Home Secretary Thomas de Maizière during the ‘Future Conference on Integration and Migration’ on 20 September 2016, looking back on the events of the past months. Contrary to widespread belief in Germany, the importance of religion and faith has not decreased globally according to Mr. de Maizière.<sup>1</sup>

This fact is still often overlooked, although its manifestations are particularly visible in German refugee shelters. For this reason, wrong conclusions are drawn in regard to the reasons behind violent attacks by Muslim refugees, while the protection of affected religious minorities in refugee shelters is neglected. On 9 May 2016 a group of charities and human rights organisations held a press conference in Berlin. These included the AVC (Aktion für verfolgte Christen und Notleidende – Action on behalf of Persecuted Christians and the Needy), the IGFM (Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte – International Society for Human Rights), Kirche in Not (Aid to the Church in Need), Open Doors and the ZOCD (Zentralrat Orientalischer Christen in Deutschland – Central Council of Oriental Christians in Germany). They had joined together in order to raise awareness of the high number of violent attacks on Christians and other religious minorities in German refugee camps and demand for protective measures to be taken on their behalf (cf. Chapter 10). During the press conference, Open Doors presented the results of a previously conducted survey among Christian refugees. In this survey 231 victims reported incidents of discrimination, death threats and violent assaults experienced by refugees in Germany due to their Christian faith.<sup>2</sup>

Open Doors, together with AVC, EMG<sup>3</sup> and the ZOCD, has continued the survey and now presents the results based on significantly increased data. The docu-

mented cases confirm that the situation of Christian refugees in German refugee shelters is still unbearable. As a minority they are discriminated against, beaten up by and receive death threats from Muslim refugees and partly by the Muslim staff (security, interpreters, volunteers) on grounds of their religion. Ten refugees of Yezidi belief also participated in the survey. These reports were evaluated separately (cf. Chapter 5.5 as well as the questionnaire in Appendix 1). Their experience matches that of the Christian refugees.

The publication of the first report in May drew considerable interest from the media as well as from politicians and churches. Subsequently, media reported with increasing openness about religiously motivated attacks against refugees (cf. Chapter 7). However, apart from very few examples, effective measures for the protection of religious minorities are yet to be implemented. Some observers have taken the regional imbalance of the survey – the majority of its cases being from Berlin and Brandenburg – as an indication that the problem is confined to this region. This conclusion however has not been confirmed by this report.

The present survey, including 512 further documented cases which have been collected between May and September 2016 in the above mentioned as well as other federal states, shows that religiously motivated attacks occur frequently and nationwide. Taking these new cases into consideration there are now 743 Christian refugees who have reported religiously motivated attacks. With more staff at hand, a significantly higher number of cases could have been included in the survey. Consequently, this second survey is still to be considered most likely as the tip of the iceberg in regard to the number of religiously motivated attacks on Christian refugees and other religious minorities. It must be assumed that there is a high number of unreported cases.

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1 Cf. <https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2016/09/2016-09-20-de-maiziere-integrationskongress.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

2 Cf. [https://www.opendoors.de/downloads/Berichte/Open\\_Doors\\_Bericht\\_Religioes\\_motivierte\\_Uebergriffe\\_gegen\\_christliche\\_Fluechlinge\\_in\\_Deutschland.pdf](https://www.opendoors.de/downloads/Berichte/Open_Doors_Bericht_Religioes_motivierte_Uebergriffe_gegen_christliche_Fluechlinge_in_Deutschland.pdf) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

3 Europäische Missionsgemeinschaft e.V. (European Mission Fellowship), Penkun

## Protecting victims or putting Muslims under general suspicion?

One of the reactions to the publication of the first report on religiously motivated attacks was the fear that this might result in putting all Muslims under general suspicion. Some drew attention to the risk that such a publication might nurture religious conflicts and xenophobia.

Of course, such warnings have to be taken very seriously. However, this must not be allowed to thwart efforts to protect the victims of these attacks. This is particularly true since a lot of the refugees belonging to religious minorities have already suffered from great injustice and persecution in their Islamic-majority home countries – for many the reason for their flight to Germany, a country they thought to be safe. Partly severely traumatised, these refugees now face similar experiences in Germany, without receiving adequate protection.

Open Doors is a non-denominational Christian charity and as such has no political agenda. According to its bylaws, the organisation puts all its efforts into supporting and advocating for Christians around the world who suffer from persecution and discrimination. This commission includes the obligation to name any injustice that religious minorities are facing in Germany now.

We believe that the trivialisation, concealment or misuse of this injustice, be it for political or other motives, will give encouragement to the perpetrators and increase the suffering of the victims.

As a Christian charity, Open Doors is not against Muslims, as CEO Markus Rode has already made clear in a comprehensive statement in January 2015.<sup>4</sup> It is a constitutive element of Christian faith that Muslims are loved by God and are to be met with love and

compassion. At the same time it has to be stated that Islam, which is the majority religion in most of the refugees' home countries, is responsible for the massive violation of the human right to freedom of religion. This is for example the case when Muslims threaten to kill converts while invoking the Koran as a basis for their action.

## Status report and documented cases call for action

This extended survey, covering attacks on 743 Christian refugees in German asylum shelters, constitutes the most extensive of its kind so far. In addition to the survey, further references are provided in an extensive collection of media reports on religiously motivated attacks on Christian refugees in German asylum shelters, which can be found on the Open Doors Website in chronologic order.<sup>5</sup> This extensive and substantiated status report is presented in the hope that responsible politicians and competent authorities will be convinced of the urgent need for swift action to support the victims and enact applicable EU Law.

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4 Cf. [https://www.opendoors.de/od\\_live/stellungnahme\\_zum\\_islam/](https://www.opendoors.de/od_live/stellungnahme_zum_islam/) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

5 <https://www.opendoors.de/fluechtlingsbericht-pressespiegel-2> (accessible form 17.10.2016)

## 2 Results of the report in brief

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### Subject of investigation:

Religiously motivated attacks on Christian refugees in Germany

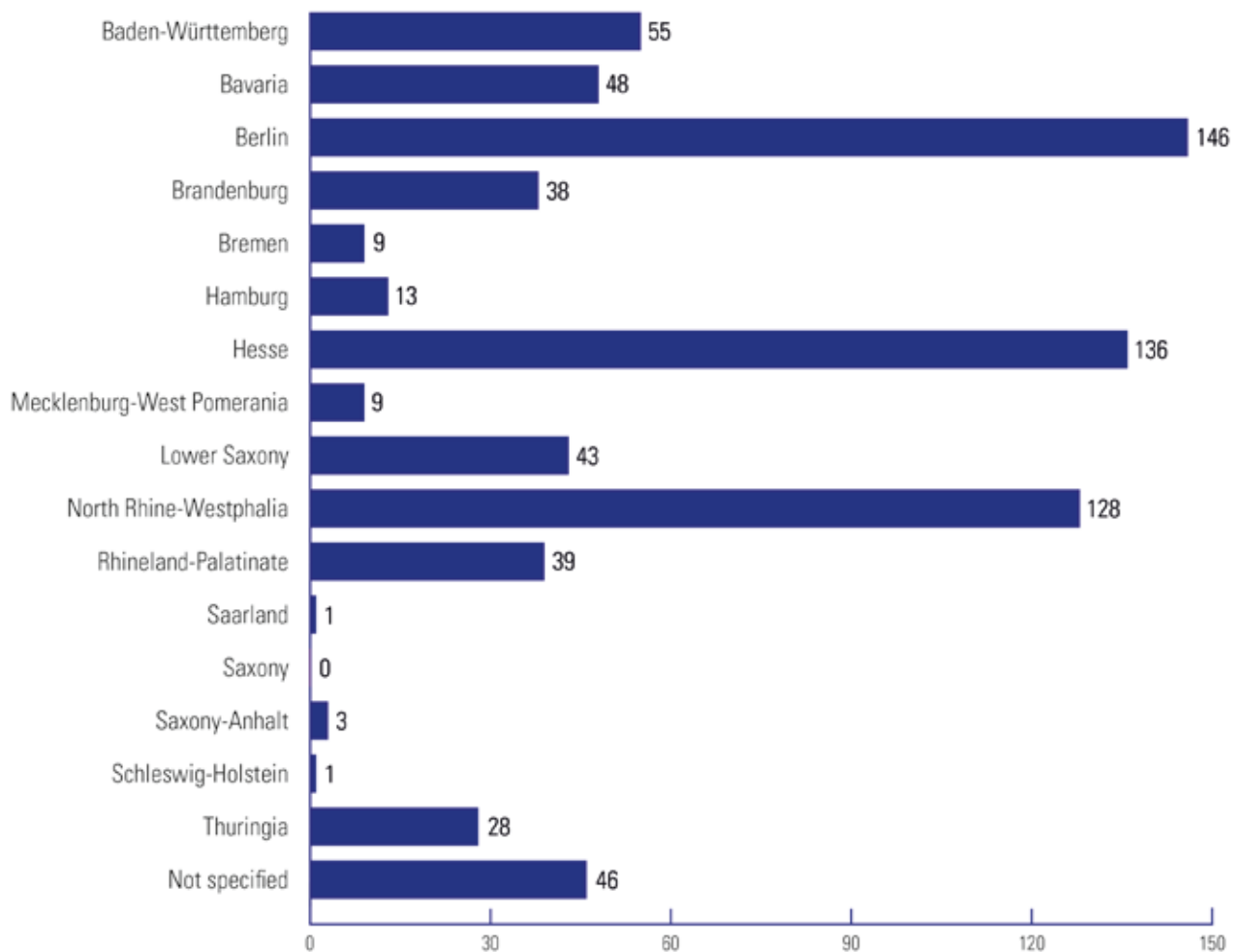
### Timeframe and geographical scope:

15 February – 30 September 2016, Germany

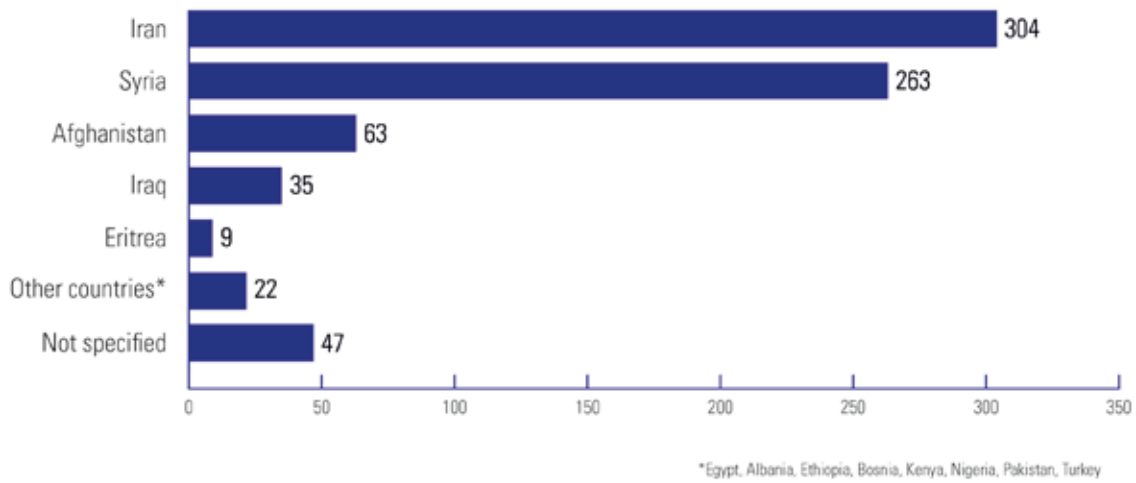
### Number of participants:

753 participants (743 Christians and 10 Yezidis)

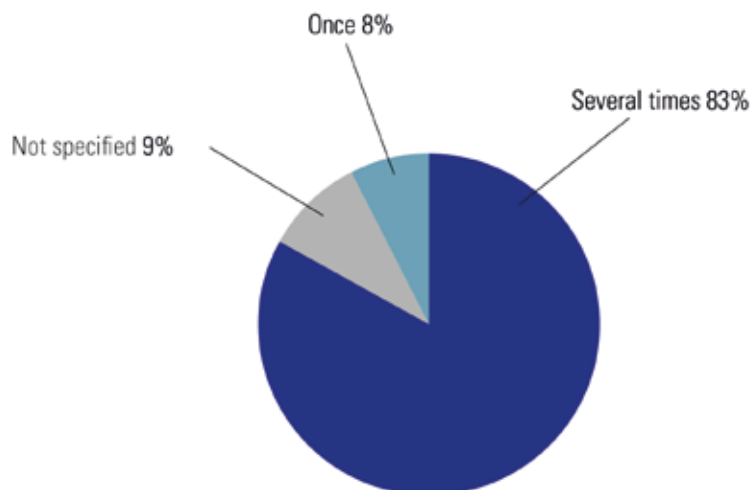
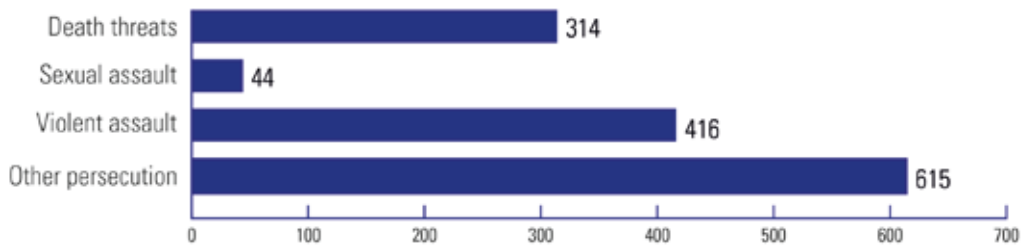
### Allocation of affected parties according to federal states



### Number of participating refugees according to countries of origin

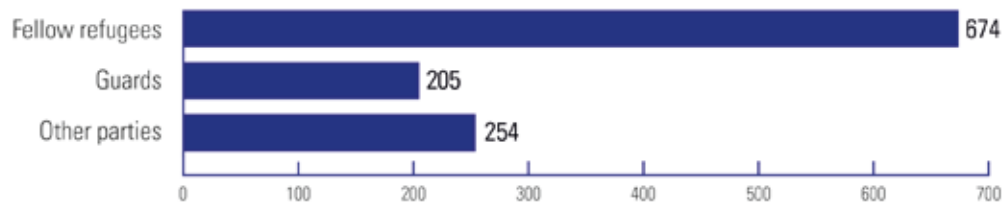


### Nature and frequency of persecution

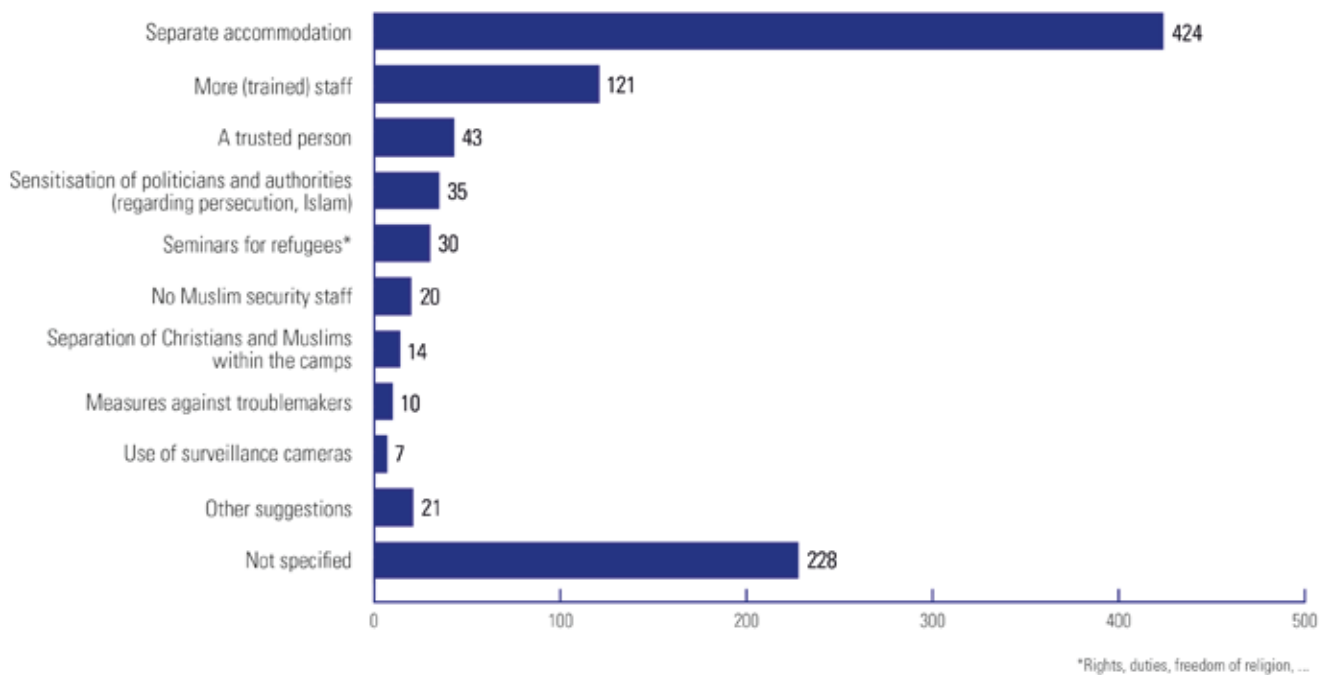




### Identity of perpetrators



### Most frequent recommendations of participating refugees on how to increase security



The detailed evaluation of the presented results, as well as further explanations and information to better assess these figures can be found in Chapter 5.

# 3 Registration, assessment and first measures

## 3.1 Systematic registration of religiously motivated attacks

The recording of religiously motivated attacks is generally a challenging task. In Germany, these actions have not yet been recorded systematically. The German department for migration and refugees (BAMF) reported in its statistical statement for 2015 that of all the asylum applications received, 73.1% were Muslims, 13.8% Christians and 4.2% were Yezidis.<sup>6</sup> BAMF submitted no comparable data regarding general refugee information.

### 3.1.1 Difficulties in registration

Although neither proof of arrival nor residence status requires the recording of religious affiliation many of the refugees do specify their religion during their initial registration. The facility management and authorities, however, are not necessarily aware of the fact that religion can be a significant motive for the attacks on religious minorities.

An overview of individual obstacles:

- >> The registration of religious affiliations are made (e.g. when criminal offences are filed) but it is still voluntary for the aggrieved and perpetrator to give this information.
- >> Language barriers and conscious mistranslations by Muslim interpreters (e.g. when translating converts) often hampers a clear classification of the offences.
- >> The perpetrators are generally not required to declare their motives.
- >> Religious motivated offences can also be reflected in offences where there is no di-

rect connection with any religious issues i.e. when Muslim men assault Christian women.

- >> The responsible departments are often not aware of the fact that religion can be a significant motive for attacks. Instead they specify them as ethnic conflicts, 'dining disputes' or because of everyday situations (see the results of AfD's short request towards the Hamburg senate in February 2016<sup>7</sup>).

These are the reasons why the cases in this report are classified as religiously motivated because the report is based on the personal experiences and assessments of the aggrieved. Unfortunately, no reliable and official assessment has yet been presented. The chairman of CDU/CSU Volker Kauder pointed out on 11 April 2016, Minister of the Interior, Thomas de Maizière, assured that future offences would be recorded separately in a sub-category termed 'religiously motivated offences' within the larger category of 'politically motivated crimes.'<sup>8</sup>

### 3.1.2 Issues concerning the non-registration of religious motives

If religiously motivated attacks against refugees in refugee centres are neither identified nor registered then it will not be possible to introduce effective countermeasures. Furthermore, Germany will then also not be able to fulfil its commitment to EU Refugee policies. These policies propose that those refugees who require special protection (and religious minorities belong in this category) should then also receive the protection they are entitled to. If this policy is not complied with then Germany will be violating its international commitments.

<sup>6</sup> The amount of asylum applications was registered at 441.899: "The federal office in numbers 2015 – Asylum", March 2016. Retrieved on 06.10.2016 from: [https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2015-asyl.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2015-asyl.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.buergerschaft-hh.de/ParlDok/dokument/51655/religi%C3%B6s-motivierte-gewalt-gegen-minderheiten-in-hamburger-fl%C3%BChtlingsheimen-ii-.pdf> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

<sup>8</sup> Cf. <https://www.cducsu.de/themen/innen-recht-sport-und-ehrenamt/christen-fluechtlingsheimen-besser-schuetzen> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

## 3.2 Assessments and measures on federal level to date

### 3.2.1 Exhaustive registration of refugees

According to a statement released on 22 June 2016 by the German department for migration and refugees (BAMF), over 1,200 registration stations have been set-up in all of the German federal states from the 1 February 2016 onwards<sup>9</sup> so that a widespread registration can be anticipated. That does not prove though that all the refugees who entered Germany in 2015 have been registered already. This gap (also called the 'EASY-Gap') should actually have been closed by the end of September already, but in the meantime mid-October has been targeted.<sup>10</sup> On 21 July 2016 BAMF stated that since February 2016 over 90,000 proof of arrival forms have been issued.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.2.2 Intensified research

The Institute for Employment Research (Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung – IAB), the research department of the Federal Employment Agency, increased its activity in the last few months in relation to refugees. They released a survey on 20 July 2016 with the title "The people who fled to Germany – a qualitative survey"<sup>12</sup> where 123 refugees were questioned regarding their current situation. In doing so, the subject 'religious minorities' was only touched on briefly, but on page 28 the following was stated:

*"Nobody feels limited or hindered in the way he practices his/her religion. In isolated cases the need for more information were expressed as to where (geographically) one could find a mosque or a church of the respective religious affiliation. On the other hand, many knew that and where a mosque or a specific church was but had no intention to visit any. Not much is really necessary to exercise one's religion, it is mostly practiced alone."*

These kind of statements insinuate that there are no existing problems when discussing the subject of religious freedom. One should not overlook though, that the members of religious minorities – for reasons discussed in the points below (see 4.4 and especially 4.4.3) are very reluctant to describe things such as discrimination and violence. It also remains unclear in what sense such occurrences had been asked about or if they had been asked to describe the reasons for such occurrences.

In the IAB survey, experts do point out the fact that religious affiliation can lead to difficulties when living together in such confined spaces.

*"The questioned experts rate the situation in the accommodations critically because when people live together in such confined spaces and when ethnic, religion, age, mentality and everyday situations differentiate so much it leads to high stress levels and potential conflicts. The accommodation in large reception centres can only be an interim solution, which is also the estimation of an expert on the employment market: The misconduct of some refugees must be equalised through the over-adaption of others. The*

9 Cf. <http://www.bamf.de/DE/DasBAMF/BAMFdigital/Ankunftsnachweis/ankunftsnachweis-node.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

10 Cf. <http://www.n-tv.de/politik/Bamf-verfehlt-das-selbstgesteckte-Ziel-article18771346.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

11 Cf. <https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2016/20160721-033-pm-fuenf-ankunftszentren-nrw.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

12 Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung der Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Hg.): Geflüchtete Menschen in Deutschland – eine qualitative Befragung. 9/2016. Retrieved on 06.10.2016 from: [http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Studien/201609-iab-forschungsbericht.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Studien/201609-iab-forschungsbericht.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

*experts view is clear on that, the facility management must stipulate standards and rules to regulate the co-habitation. An expert stated that a well-regulated and safe accommodation for all involved parties will come to nothing if there is a shortage of staff. Unpredictability, suppression and corruption in the initial reception centres will be the consequences."*

The observation of the phenomenon of "over-adaption" deserves a closer look, because in this case it is left unsaid which group is the one that needs to adapt. Those affected will, in most cases, be those groups who constitute a minority. Out of fear, they would obey beforehand and over-adapt to avoid the immediate consequences and to not offend or attract any attention. It is obvious that this is already the case where religious minorities modelled such behaviour in their countries of origin over several generations.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that most probably the statement regarding exercising ones religion freely, as the IAB survey implied, is in several cases the result of such over-adaption. With reference to this, the survey which only questioned a small amount of 123 refugees, has unfortunately not commented on this matter at all.

### 3.2.3 The German integration law of 25 May, 2016

The federal government decided in its 'Meseberger declaration on integration' on 25 May 2016 that attacks on those in need of protection must be confronted. It is written: *"Attacks on women, children and others in need of protection will not be accepted. It does not matter if the attacks are directed at citizens of our country or against refugees. That is why the federal government has clearly condemned attacks against women e.g. on New Year's Eve 2015/2016 by swiftly changing our laws. The attacks in refugee*

*centres must also be confronted consequently. The federal government, together with the federal states, will have a prompt examination and see to what extent a federal statutory regulation will be necessary to guarantee the safety of such."*<sup>14</sup> (Emphasis not in the original)

This is a welcome change, but reference of religious and other minorities is completely missing so that it stays unclear if the federal state is aiming at protecting them, and is also adequately aware of the problem.

Separating refugees according to their religious affiliation, even after severe religious motivated attacks, is still not foreseen. In that case, looking at the experiences of 2015/2016, conflicts are highly likely to arise, while those suffering the most will in any case be Christians, Yezidis and other religious minorities. The law in §12a also entails a residential regulation for those refugees who have received a residence permit including residential conditions.<sup>15</sup> These conditions are interpreted differently in the various federal states; and so the aggrieved living in Lower Saxony, for example, are obliged to choose their place of residence in the federal state to which they had been allocated during the initial process.<sup>16</sup> In Bavaria, the state law allows the refugee "to move around at will within the district or the administratively independent city" to which he/she had been allocated.

In cases where a federal state displaces a refugee in a specific area within the parameters of the residential regulations, members of religious minorities can be put in a precarious situation. That would be the case when a perpetrator and the victim of a religious motivated attack were to be accommodated together in a small community. In such a case it would be necessary to make sure that the exception rule (§12a sect. 5 No. 2c) is applied. The Bavarian regulation implements the asylum law (DVAsyl) in such a case

<sup>13</sup> Detailed information on several countries of origin are retrievable at [http://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/country\\_profiles.php](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/country_profiles.php) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Pressemitteilungen/BPA/2016/05/2016-05-25-meseberger-erklaerung.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

<sup>15</sup> The residential regulations and conditions entail two aspects: On the one hand, the asylum-seeker is obliged to stay within the borders of the federal state he has been allocated to for three years; at the same time the federal states has the right to determine in exactly which place an asylum-seeker has to reside.

<sup>16</sup> Randermann, Heiko. „Flüchtlinge dürfen ihren Wohnsitz doch frei wählen“, Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung, 22.09.2016

allowing the displacement within the federal state's borders when "substantial reasons or the general understanding allows the presumption that a specific person (group), when accommodated in the same facility could be in an unsafe situation due to hostile or rivalling nationalities or ethnic groups."<sup>17</sup> In addition to that, it needs to be noted that not only ethnic but especially religious minorities are exposed to such unsafe situations and that is why they are also in need of protection.

What these regulations cannot achieve is a guaranteed proactive protection of religious minorities. According to the results of the present survey that is an urgent requirement.

The Vice President of the German department for migration and refugees has already made it known in the letter he gave to the German Evangelical Alliance's federal governments delegate on 6 June 2016, that the problem of attacks on Christian refugees are well known:

*"From various places and personalities, the large amount of attacks, mobbing, intimidation and harassment of especially converts reached us. The German department for migration and refugees are definitely pursuing notifications of attacks and violence in refugee centres and collecting the corresponding information thoroughly."*<sup>18</sup>

In reference to the previously quoted Meseberger declaration, an additional consequence is clarified:

*"That is why the federal government will quickly examine to what extent governmental regulations are necessary to guarantee the safety of those living in*

*these facilities. We will then forward our suggestions to the federal ministry of the interior to assess the legislative measures and will continue to observe this matter carefully."*<sup>19</sup>

In an attempt to impart the importance of religious freedom and the religious diversity practiced in Germany to the refugees, BAMF conducts so called orientation courses. In addition to this subject, the 60-hour course deals with many other themes.<sup>20</sup> It is though predominantly religious identity that defines the majority of the refugees.

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17 <http://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayDVAsyl-10> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

18 Griesbeck, Michael. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge. Ihr Schreiben vom Mai 2016 an den Leiter des Bundesamts für Migration und Flüchtlinge. Brief an W. Baake, Evangelische Allianz Deutschlands, 06.06.2016

19 *ibid.*

20 Gcf. Curriculum orientation course, March 2015, BAMF (Hg.), Module I and III at least touches the themes of religious freedom. Retrieved on 06.10.2016 from: [http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Integrationskurse/Kurstraeger/KonzepteLeitfaeden/curriculum-orientierungskurs-pdf.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Integrationskurse/Kurstraeger/KonzepteLeitfaeden/curriculum-orientierungskurs-pdf.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

### 3.3 Assessments and measures on state level to date

A major problem for the containment of religiously motivated attacks are the numerous jurisdictions. The initial reception centres are run by the federal states. After allocation to the local community, the proceeding supervision is then taken care of by the community administration. Finally, the cities and the districts then have the responsibility to prevent any further issues.<sup>21</sup> That obviously creates a very vague scenario.

Consequently, the individual integration laws of the federal states, that in large parts are only available as drafts, do not discuss the handling of religiously motivated attacks.<sup>22</sup> In most cases it is just verified that the religious freedom in the respective federal states is an inviolable fundamental right.

#### 3.3.1 Relativizing the problems (Lower Saxony, Hamburg, Bremen, NRW)

The protection of those refugees who are part of religious minorities is indisputable. While some politicians recognise the problem that they are being attacked,<sup>23</sup> other politicians and responsible authorities are saying that they have not heard about a single

occurrence.<sup>24</sup> The Minister of the Interior of the federal state of **North Rhine-Westphalia**, Ralf Jaeger, commented on the request of the German Evangelical Alliance's delegate in a letter from 1 August 2016:

*"My department has no knowledge of any religiously motivated attacks on Christian refugees or other religious minorities in the facilities of this federal state. There are also no reports confirming that Christians, Yezidis or other religious minorities in the refugee centres are at risk."*<sup>25</sup>

In **Hamburg** several media reported on religiously motivated attacks on Christians in refugee accommodations. On 17 March 2016, the Hamburger Abendblatt wrote:

*"The senate however sees no 'particular higher risk' for religious hostilities and refers to the rules of the house in the accommodations, which obliges the residents to treat each other thoughtfully. The facility is a place of religious neutrality. In various discussions it has been concluded that the complaints regarding religious discrimination were only pushed forward to effect a relocation, thus obtaining better accommodation."*<sup>26</sup>

In May 2016, Nadine Bunzler, speaker of the Department of the Interior of **Lower Saxony** and Bernd Schneider, speaker of the **Bremen** Social Senator made similar statements: Crimes on the basis of religious affiliation are unknown to us.<sup>27</sup>

21 The provisional executive Ralf Stettner of the initial reception centre in Gießen/Hesse clarified this differentiation in a released interview in April 2016. Retrieved on 06.10.2016 from: <http://chrison.evangelisch.de/artikel/2016/32095/religioese-konflikte-unter-fluechtlingen>

22 Cf. e.g. the Bavarian integration law, Drafted law of the state government from 10 May 2016, Landtags-Drucksache 17/11362 (retrieved on 06.10.2016 from: [https://www.bayern.landtag.de/www/ElanTextAblage\\_WP17/Drucksachen/Basisdrucksachen/0000007000/0000007265.pdf](https://www.bayern.landtag.de/www/ElanTextAblage_WP17/Drucksachen/Basisdrucksachen/0000007000/0000007265.pdf)) and the request of the SPD party, as well as Fraktion Bündnis 90/Die Grünen in the state parliament of North Rhein-Westphalia, "Successful integration of refugees". An integration plan for NRW, from the 23 February 2016, Landtags-Drucksache 16/11229 (retrieved on 06.10.2016 from: <https://www.landtag.nrw.de/portal/WWW/dokumentenarchiv/Dokument/MMD16-11229.pdf>)

23 The speaker on religious policies of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, Dr. Franz-Josef Jung, explained on 13 July that his party is considering the introduction of an emergency telephone (retrieved on 06.10.2016 from: <https://www.cducsu.de/themen/innen-recht-sport-und-ehrenamt/mehr-sicherheit-fuer-christen-fluechtlingsheimen>)

24 Exemplary answer of the minister the interior of NRW on the short question of the CDU-state parliament on 13 June 2016, Landtags-Drucksache 16/12249 (retrieved on 06.10.2016 from: <https://www.landtag.nrw.de/portal/WWW/dokumentenarchiv/Dokument?Id=MMD16/12249&quelle=alle>)

25 Jäger, Ralf. Minister of the interior and municipal of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Accommodating asylum seeking Christians and Yezidis in state facilities. Letter to W. Baake, German Evangelical Alliance, 01.08.2016

26 [http://www.abendblatt.de/thema\\_552/article207214099/Wie-zwei-Fluechtlinge-als-Christen-verfolgt-werden.html](http://www.abendblatt.de/thema_552/article207214099/Wie-zwei-Fluechtlinge-als-Christen-verfolgt-werden.html) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

27 Cf. [http://www.nwzonline.de/politik/niedersachsen/land-verzeichnet-keine-uebergrieffe-auf-christen\\_a\\_31\\_0,106373919.html](http://www.nwzonline.de/politik/niedersachsen/land-verzeichnet-keine-uebergrieffe-auf-christen_a_31_0,106373919.html) (retrieved on 6.10.2016)



### 3.3.2 State Parliament rejects request for better protection of Christians (Thuringia)

At the end of September 2016, the Thuringia state parliament discussed a proposal filed by the CDU faction with the title 'Strengthening interreligious competence and tolerance – protecting Christian values and ostracising and punishing anti-Christian violence'<sup>28</sup>. The proposal entailed the request to document "religiously motivated attacks against Christians/ anti-Christian motivated crimes" statistically and to include interreligious competence in the nationwide regulation for the security industry. The proposal, as well as another proposal by AfD with the title 'Protecting religious freedom – preventing violence on Christian asylum seekers' which was filed in April 2016, did not win a majority.<sup>29,30</sup> This subject, religiously motivated attacks on Christians, has thus been debated in the Thuringia state parliament on several occasions and to a certain extent the discussion was also about the separate accommodation of religious minorities.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, no tangible measures have been drawn up as of yet.

### 3.3.3 Putting limitations on religious freedom (Bavaria)

Regarding the Open Doors survey, the integration commissioner of the Bavarian government, Martin Neumeyer, commented to Open Doors:

*"To me, religious freedom means that everybody is free in his beliefs. Religious freedom [...] does not mean, that referring to your faith you are allowed to suppress others. Religious freedom is only conceivable, [...] as long as you are tolerant towards other religions. Whoever is not willing to do that, in my opinion, should also not be allowed to appeal religious freedom for himself. [...] Whoever terrorises Christians, or even Atheists in refugee centres, according to me, should also not be able to claim protection as a refugee."*<sup>32</sup>

The Bavarian state still has a negative stance towards separate accommodation as protective measure for religious minorities. In a document directed to Open Doors on 20 September 2016, the Bavarian Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, Family Affairs and Integration referred to the possibility, in difficult and individual cases, that the permission to move out can be obtained. But:

*"Special accommodations for Christian asylum seekers do not exist. It is furthermore expected that all who are seeking protection, regardless of their religion, origin and sexual orientation, will be living together peacefully."*<sup>33</sup>

28 <http://www.parldok.thueringen.de/ParlDok/dokument/59223/interreligi%25c3%25b6se-kompetenz-und-toleranz-st%25c3%25a4rken-christliche-werte-sch%25c3%25bctzen-und-antichristliche-gewalt-%25c3%25a4chten-und-ahnden.pdf> (retrieved on 07.10.2016)

29 Cf. <http://www.idea.de/politik/detail/thueringen-cdu-antrag-zum-besseren-schutz-von-christen-faellt-durch-98424.html> (retrieved on 07.10.2016)

30 Cf. <http://www.idea.de/politik/detail/thueringen-landtag-lehnt-antrag-zum-schutz-christlicher-fluechtlinge-ab-96552.html> (retrieved on 07.10.2016)

31 Cf. <http://www.tlz.de/web/zgt/politik/detail/-/specific/Erfurter-CDU-Fraktion-will-Muslime-und-Christen-separat-unterbringen-1786635423> (retrieved on 07.10.2016)

32 E-Mail from Martin Neumeyer to the Open Doors press office, 29.08.2016

33 Bavarian ministry for labour and social affairs, family affairs and integration. Letter to Markus Rode (CEO of Open Doors Germany), 20.09.2016

### 3.3.4 Catalogue of measures for the prevention of religious conflicts (Hesse)

Towards the end of August a conversation took place between the CEO of Open Doors Germany and the Minister of the Interior of the state of Hesse. During this, the Minister of the Interior received documentation, where 32 religiously motivated attacks against Christians in a single reception centre has been registered. The Minister of the Interior promised that he would deal with this problem in his federal state intensively. In the meantime the interior and the social ministries of the state of Hesse in collaboration with the church representatives have developed an action plan to optimise the safety of those aggrieved through religious conflicts. At the beginning of October, Open Doors received a summarised overview of the respective measures, which is listed below:<sup>34</sup>

- >> Increased occupation of the facility management with personnel operating according to unified guidelines (Promotion of an unified conception)
- >> Defined, delegated responsibilities for the external service providers in the locations
- >> Improvement of the information and message chains (HEAE, RP, Gießen and the social department) about respective incidents
- >> Sensitising the site management and the employees (full-time social workers) on-site.
- >> Providing the team with on-site guards and interpreters with varying religious affiliations to ensure the neutral passing on and treatment of issues. (this has already been implemented in Frankfurt and Rotenburg a. d. Fulda)
- >> Staffing the Info points with staff from different religious affiliations.
- >> Introduction of a 'registration book' at the Info point in all the reception centres in the state of Hesse to register all the reports filed during the day and documenting the procedures that follow
- >> Direct communication options for refugees contacting the state site management via exclusively established post-box.
- >> Contact details for all matters concerning the reception centre is to be found in all the accountable police stations
- >> Sensitising of all officers regarding the conflict potential of religious attacks
- >> Sensitising of all shift working staff when documenting initial likely religiously motivated crimes
- >> Inclusion of the topic 'religiously motivated attacks and equality of all religions' at information events for refugees conducted by HKE (Hesse Information and Competence Centre Against Extremism – current status: 27 events in 14 reception centres)
- >> Inclusion of the topic 'religious motivated attacks and equality of all religions' at staff training in initial reception centres by the federal office for the protection of the constitution (current status: 18 events with over 1000 participants)
- >> Contact person for the accommodation of refugees in the community in every police station
- >> Development of respective modules to be included in the current overall prevention programme 'Concept for dialogue with refugees/trust building in the second reception' of the police migration representative

<sup>34</sup> E-Mail from the minister of interior and sport, Dr Roland Wagner, to Markus Rode (CEO of Open Doors Germany), 4.10.2016; Catalogue of measures also retrievable from: <https://www.opendoors.de/massnahmen-hessen>



- >> Inclusion of an explicit reference to the equality and equal treatment of religions in Germany printed on the flyer “Welcome to Germany”
- >> Information events of HKE with the management of the Hesse youth welfare office (two events in October 2016) and also the mayors from Hesse (“Extremism Prevention – State and Community working together for Hesse” on the 2 December 2016). Especially practical assistance, projects and subsidies for the prevention and intervention of extremism in Hesse will be presented (i.e. Offers from the Hesse counselling centre ‘Religious tolerance instead of extremism’ programme in the field of multiplier training, working with young people at risk of being radicalised, counselling of relatives, opt-out counselling)
- >> Sensitisation on the management level of the police administration and departments as well as the directorates of the criminal police (responsible for state security offices) regarding religious conflict
- >> Designating a contact person in the context of the deployment department of the state police headquarters
- >> Coordination of the evangelical and catholic church representatives to sensitise and coordinate the flow of information as well as the improvement of the responsiveness on-site

Regarding the latter named measure, it would be desirable to specifically involve other church organisations when developing protective concepts because they do not only have the much needed cultural competence but also far-reaching experience in the work with refugees. This includes churches of migrants and German churches that are highly involved in refugee work and/or working with converts as well as the umbrella organisations of the affected oriental Christians i.e. ZOCD. In every case the catalogue of measures presented by the Home ministry of Hesse is a positive example showing that grievances have been recognised by the responsible parties who have in turn developed specific solutions.

### 3.4 Assessments of the state churches

The chairmen of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD) and of the German Bishops' Conference (DBK) also recognise the need to specifically protect Christian refugees in principle, yet they still consider attacks on them to be individual cases. On 6 July, the EKD chairman stated that confirmed cases needed to be investigated and dealt with.<sup>35</sup> This is to be commended unreservedly. However, as this extended survey shows, the vast majority of the affected Christians are still waiting in vain to receive help. On 12 July, the chairmen of the EKD and DBK issued a joint statement saying that "in the past months" a survey along with the hearing of experts had been conducted, resulting in a differentiated consideration. It reads:

*"There are reports portraying incidents where Christians and other religious minorities have been subject to rejection, intimidation, discrimination or even violence based on their religious affiliation. No one, including government bodies, is able to give specific numbers of such incidents. But even if what is presently known are but individual cases, they must by no means be trivialized. As in all cases when human dignity is violated it needs to be said: Each case is one case too many."*<sup>36</sup>

The special situation of converts is also recognised:

*"Asylum seekers who have converted from Islam to Christianity are in a special situation. There are comparatively many reports of physical assaults and the blaspheming of religious symbols up to death threats. In Islamic countries, converts are often exposed to persecution by the state or social ostracism. More than a few asylum seekers are likely to uphold the concept they are familiar with from their home countries even after having fled to Germany, that anyone who converts from Islam to Christianity has committed a major offence. What is more, converts sometimes experience harsh rejection by Muslim security guards and interpreters."*<sup>37</sup>

Separating refugees according to their religious beliefs (the situation most requested by those interviewed in the course of Open Doors' first survey) is at least being recognised as a last resort:

*"Yet it needs to be said with all clarity: The ideal of peaceful coexistence of people from different upbringings must not lead to individual asylum seekers or particular groups of refugees being exposed to attacks. If the protection of minorities cannot be guaranteed in a given refugee shelter, separate accommodation can be an appropriate solution. The same is true if conflicts arise or are imminent and a solution can either not be found or would be at the expense of the victims. The protection of minorities and the prevention of human suffering must be given absolute priority."*<sup>38</sup>

35 Cf. [http://www.ekd.de/aktuell\\_presse/news\\_2016\\_07\\_06\\_03\\_bs\\_christenverfolgung.html](http://www.ekd.de/aktuell_presse/news_2016_07_06_03_bs_christenverfolgung.html) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

36 Kardinal Reinhard Marx (Chairman of the German Conference of Bishops) und Landesbischof Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm (Chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany), Stellungnahme zur Situation von Christen und religiösen Minderheiten in Asylbewerberunterkünften, 12.07.2016, Seite 3 (retrieved 06.10.2016 from: [http://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse\\_downloads/presse\\_2016/2016-123a-Gemeinsame-Stellungnahme-Situation-Asylbewerberunterkuenfte.pdf](http://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse_downloads/presse_2016/2016-123a-Gemeinsame-Stellungnahme-Situation-Asylbewerberunterkuenfte.pdf))

37 ibid

38 ibid

At this point, however, the authors show caution in pointing out that “so far only a few rare cases of interreligious conflicts have arisen in refugee shelters run by Christian operators”.<sup>39</sup> Assessments of other organisations like the ZOCD have apparently not been included in the findings.<sup>40</sup>

The significance of this survey is severely limited by a few ambiguities. Firstly, there are no statements specifying its scope.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, the state churches have presented neither numbers, nor facts, nor any details regarding the methodology applied within the survey. There are no indications that the affected religious minorities living in the shelters run by the churches have in any way been included in the survey. For this reason, the two chairmen’s statements don’t allow any valid assessment concerning the frequency or the prevalence of such conflicts within Germany.

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39 *ibid*, page 4

40 Cf. e.g. Interview with the chairman of the ZOCD Paulus Kurt on June 7 2016. Retrieved on 06.10.2016 from: <https://de.zenit.org/articles/der-rechtsstaat-auf-den-die-christen-vertraut-haben-hat-in-diesen-heimen-nicht-funktioniert/>

41 In an interview with the Saarländischer Rundfunk [Saarland radio station] the speaker of the German Bishops Conference of Bishops, Matthias Kopp, was unable to state the scope of the survey even upon specific request: <http://sr-mediathek.sr-online.de/index.php?seite=7&id=42295> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

# 4 Data acquisition

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## 4.1 Concept of the questionnaire

For the implementation of the first Open Doors report in May 2016, a questionnaire was developed which included 16 questions. The questions concerned the personal information of the affected persons (name, age, sex, country of origin, religious background, place of accommodation in Germany). Further questions concerned the kind of attack, the type of persecution event (death threats, sexual assaults, violent assaults, other forms of persecution) as well as identity and alleged motives of the perpetrators (fellow refugees, guards or other parties) and the date, in regard to the timeframe in which the incidents took place.

If the attacks were reported, the responses of the police and the internal administration of the shelter were asked about. If not, the affected persons were asked to give reasons.

Finally the affected persons could name the desirable consequences they felt could improve the situation and make further remarks.

For the present report the questionnaire has been modified, thus giving the questioned the option to add his/her place and date of birth in addition to the country of birth. Other than that the options in Question 13 ("If incidents were reported, did the refugee shelter's internal administration or police act on it and take measures to protect you against further assaults?") has been reduced from five (never, from time to time, often, mostly, each time) to three (never, from time to time, each time).<sup>42</sup>

## 4.2 Timeframe and geographical scope of investigation

The survey for the first report was conducted between the 15 February and the 15 April 2016. The survey proceeded after this date until the 30 September 2016. The present report entails all the questionnaires that have been registered up until the latter date and has been accumulated from almost all the German federal states. Besides the possibility to report any transgressions to Open Doors, the staff from the collaborating organisations also visited specific facilities. In almost every facility visited, religiously motivated attacks occurred which reinforces the notion that the documented cases cannot be classified as individual cases, and thus, is a problem occurring nationwide.

The documentation had its limits due to the restricted timeframe and personnel. Therefore it is not safe to assume that regional accumulations in particular federal states automatically mean that the situation of religious minorities in other parts of Germany are generally better or worse. Furthermore it needs to be said the obstacles for the processing of individual cases are very high (see 4.4) and can often only be overcome once the needed environment has been created where trust can be developed.

## 4.3 Implementation

While conducting the survey, the protection of the questioned and the credibility of the information was given prominence. That is why Open Doors collaborated with an existing cross-denominational network of people and partner organisations who worked in direct contact with the refugees. The majority of the questionnaires were filled out as the ZOCD staff visited the affected refugees as they also had been contacted via the ZOCD emergency hotline (see 4.4). Above that the questionnaire was also accessible and could be downloaded from the Open Doors website. To prevent any

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<sup>42</sup> The modified questionnaire to this report is attached as Appendix 1

misuse and generic answers being given, the questionnaires could not be downloaded at will. It was only accessible via personal code after the credentials had been authenticated between the direct contact of the trusted person working with the refugees and an Open Doors employee. Open Doors staff had the questionnaires translated and then logged the results into the database.

## 4.4 Challenges during the registration of the attacks

In June 2015, ZOCD launched an emergency hotline for Germany, so that those Christian refugees who had been attacked could report the incidents. The hotline was well accepted and was a great help, assuring the survey had a wide spectrum and the reported cases were from various different regions. The hotline also allowed a safe environment, which is crucial in allowing the refugees to openly share their experiences. The ZOCD often experienced that, when a refugee had the boldness to call in and had the assurance to speak about what he/she experienced, then other refugees also felt confident enough to talk about the attacks and discrimination they experienced. Such emergency options supplied by trustworthy organisations are the main channel through which these cases have become known. From time to time, the media and the press would also report on certain attacks; volunteers who are mostly also connected to the local authorities or churches and also pastors are often the source of these reports.

### 4.4.1 Language and culture

Due to the linguistic and cultural challenges as well as the sensitivity of the topic, the conduct of the survey was dependent upon reliable local partners. For this reason, the participating pastors and volunteers played an important role in building relationships with refugees. Some partners had already been engaged with

refugee work for several years. Furthermore, it was important to keep the inhibitions created by language issues as low as possible, since it was much easier for survey participants to express their experiences in their mother tongue. In those cases, where the ZOCD staff conducted the survey or where direct contact with the affected party existed (AVC and EMG) already, it was obviously a lot easier to overcome this obstacle. In other cases it was difficult to find adequate translators in the numbers necessary. For this reason, Open Doors not only provided the questionnaires in German and English, but also in the respective languages of the refugees. In this way, the affected persons were able to fill in the information independently and simply return the questionnaire to the local partner responsible. Alternatively, the questionnaire could be filled in together with the local partner. Open Doors then had all questionnaires translated into German or English.

### 4.4.2 Time and resources

Another challenge during the acquisition of data was the large amount of time which the survey partners had to invest. Besides a series of multiple choice questions, the questionnaire deliberately included open questions and space for extensive comments. This made the thorough completion of the questionnaire very time-consuming. At the same time, the survey partners who filled out the questionnaire with the refugees were often already involved to their full capacity with refugee work. Thus, the onsite questioning was done to a greater extent in cooperation with ZOCD.

### 4.4.3 Fears of the refugees

A main obstacle in compiling the data was the fear of the affected people. Many feared possible negative consequences if their personal information ended up in the wrong hands. These concerns were not only directed towards consequences for themselves and their families living in Germany, but also for their relatives still living in their home countries.

A major obstacle for women was in giving details about sexual assaults, since this issue involves a sense of shame. Among Middle Eastern women feelings of shame are much more highly pronounced than among women of Western influence.

What made the situation even more difficult, was that many refugees had had negative experiences with the authorities and police in their home countries because of their faith. They are used to being treated as lower-class citizens and now they are experiencing that there are also no effective protective measures in Germany. When they report the violent attacks and death threats to the police, the perpetrators experience no consequences because the Muslim culprits who form the majority then file a contradictory report. As a result the many victims lose heart, because their experience magnifies the impression that reporting any further attacks would be to no avail. The result is a massive loss of confidence in the German legal system.

The highest risk in participating in the survey was taken by the converts from Islam to Christianity, according to the Quran their change of faith is considered as a crime worthy of the death penalty, therefore they are explicitly in danger.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4.4.4 Colliding interests of the involved parties

An unrestricted assessment of religiously motivated attacks can also oppose the interests of other involved parties. The facility operators' and/or managements' endeavour is to resolve the conflict internally and without any media involvement. Thus the resolving of religiously motivated attacks in a Muslim-dominated refugee centre and environment inclines to lead to the relocation of the offended instead of reconciliation and the necessary consequences for the perpetrators.

On several occasions it has been reported that the facility management reacted in such conflicts and attacks by removing the victims (or the perpetrators) from the accommodation to secure a peaceful cohabitation. Such a consequence is effective in the short term but is not a sustainable solution for the long run, in such a case the problem is only moved. The Berlin Pastor Dr Gottfried Martens from the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) in Berlin-Steglitz, who is supervising over 1,000 Christian refugees reported such a case:

*"In the meantime, the problems in the accommodations are solved differently. Lately we are experiencing an increase in the banning of Christian asylum seekers because they are apparently disturbing the pleasant cohabitation in the refugee centres. The six Christians who were attacked in Tempelhof got kicked out of their accommodation by the security service just a few days after the incident. That is also one way to make sure the accommodation stays peaceful."*<sup>44</sup>

43 Cf. the official comment of the Al-Azhar University in Cairo on the 16.06.2016. Retrieved on 06.10.2016 from: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/06/4526793/>

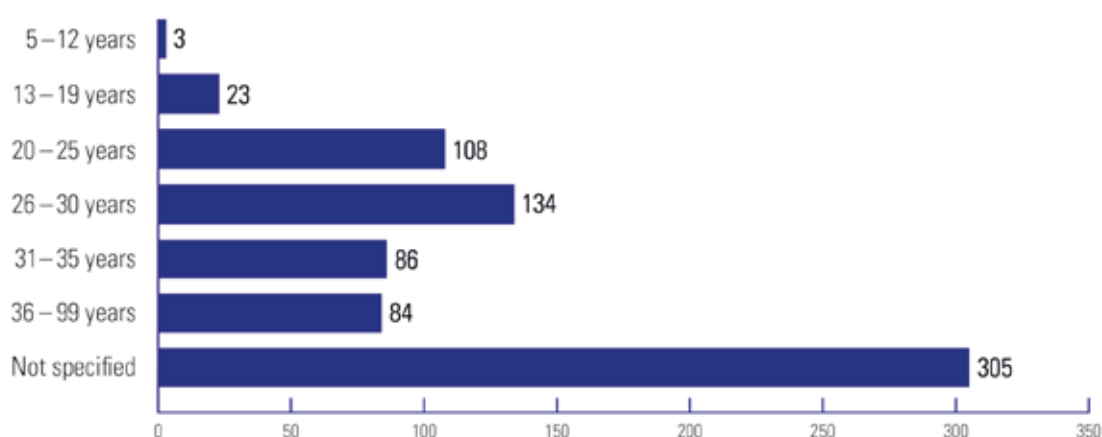
44 [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=481415735401468&id=417213035155072](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=481415735401468&id=417213035155072) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

# 5 Evaluation of the extended survey

## 5.1 Statistical framework

The majority of the surveyed victims being attacked were men (75% or 559 people). They are relatively young (48%/354 are 35 years or younger). The detailed listing paints the following picture:

### Age breakdown of the questioned refugees

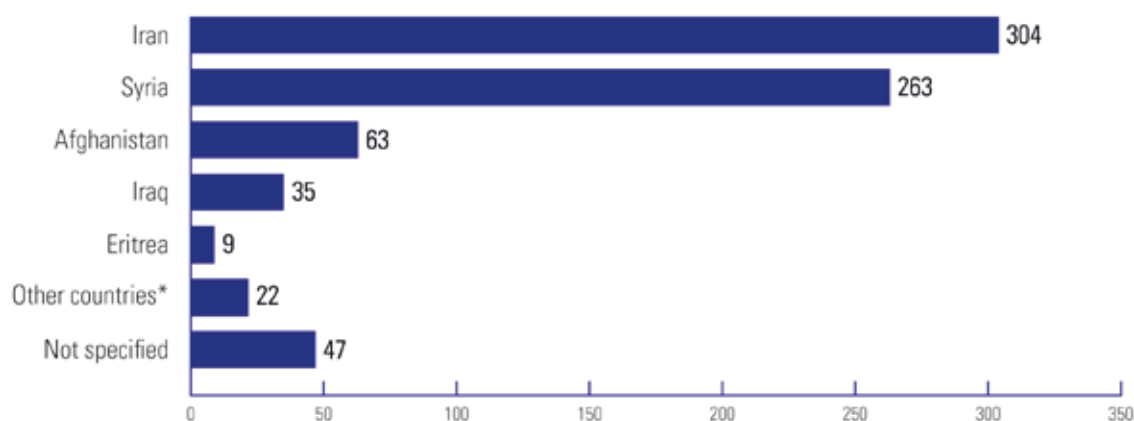


Those who participated in the survey predominantly came to Germany from Iran (41%/304 people) and Syria (35%/263) as well as Afghanistan (8%/63) and from Iraq (5%/35). 32% of the questioned (235 people) were still accommodated in their initial reception centre while being surveyed.

51% (380) of them are converts; people who have changed their religion. Within the framework of the

survey they are identified as Christians who used to be Muslims but decided to become Christians later in life. Their amount has declined compared to the numbers during the first survey but are still the majority. 29% of them converted in Germany while 62% of them converted to the Christian faith in their respective countries of origin.

### Number of participating refugees according to countries of origin



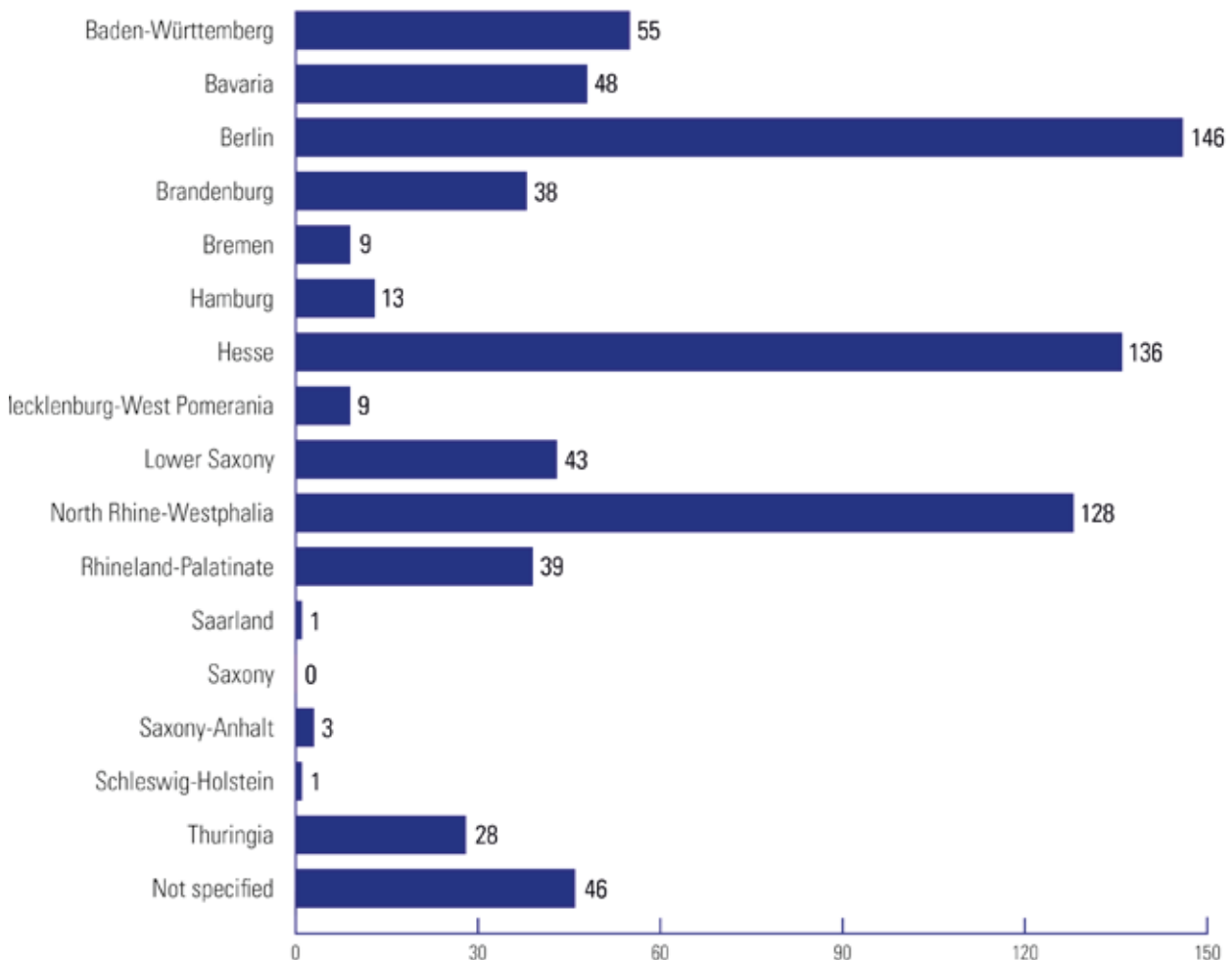
\*Egypt, Albania, Ethiopia, Bosnia, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Turkey

## 5.2 Allocation of affected parties according to federal states

The number of responses documented in this survey vary distinctly in each of the federal states. For this reason, it is not possible to make a qualified conclusion regarding the amount of attacks in each of the respective federal states. In relation to the survey this is mainly due to the limited timeframe and restricted amount of human resources available, therefore all the refugee centres could not be visited and questioned with the same intensity. In addition to that, the collaborating partners who had external and trustworthy facilitators in several places helping the affected parties to answer the questionnaires, had qualitatively different networks they could tap into. Over and above that, the Koenigsteiner method that is used to calculate the admission quota, leads to substantial differences in the distribution of the refugees in the various federal states.<sup>45</sup>

It is beyond doubt that a greater amount of personnel would also have been able to document a higher amount of attacks in the whole of Germany. We have to presuppose that the transgressions, irrespective of the regional differences, are taking place on a nationwide scale.

### Allocation of affected parties according to federal states

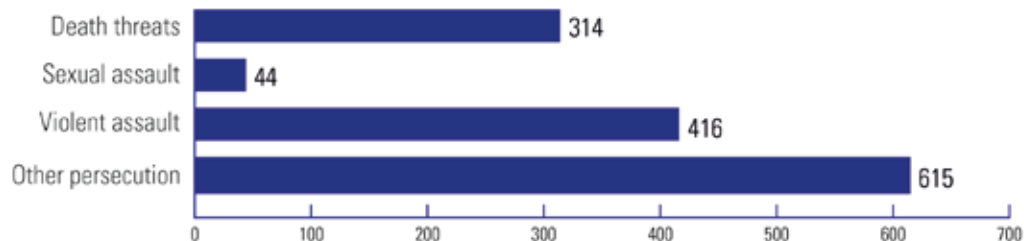


<sup>45</sup> Cf. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/fluechtlinge-so-koennte-eine-gerechte-verteilung-aussehen-a-1081169.html> (retrieved on 08.10.2016)



## 5.3 Characteristics of discrimination and violence

### Nature of persecution



When questioned about the nature of the attacks, assault was named most often (56%/416 people), followed by death threats, either directed directly at the Christian refugees and/or their family in Germany or in their home countries (42%/314). 44 people indicated that they had been victims of sexual assaults. Besides these main categories the following discriminations were specified in the category 'other forms of persecution': Insults (51%/378), general threats (29%/219) and physical attacks that had not been defined as an assault (17%/127). 11% of those questioned felt intimidated by loud music/prayers. That was especially problematic during the Islamic month of fasting, Ramadan, which took place within the timeframe of the survey.

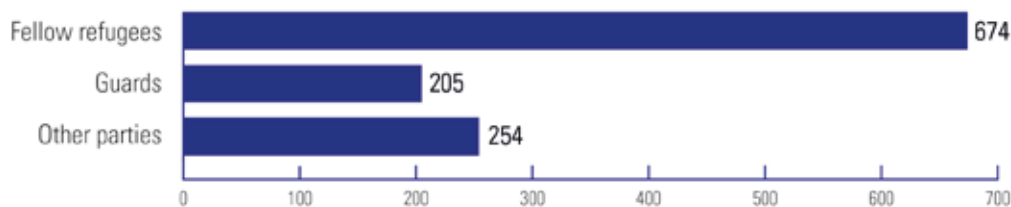
» *They constantly played very loud Islamic prayers and Quran verses on their mobile phones – at any time of day and everywhere in the accommodations. In addition to that, they also sent their children to me, asking me: "Why are you a Christian? Why are you not covering your hair?"*  
– Syrian Christian

» *A Macedonian woman attacked me with a knife, insulting me and shouting: 'You are not allowed to come into the kitchen or cook here, because you are a disgusting, pork eating Christian infidel. It is forbidden for you to enter the kitchen and if see you here once more then I will stab you to death.'*  
– Syrian Christian

Time and again the Christian refugees are disadvantaged in public supplies (8%/63 people), deliberately woken at night (4%/28) or sexually harassed (5%/37).

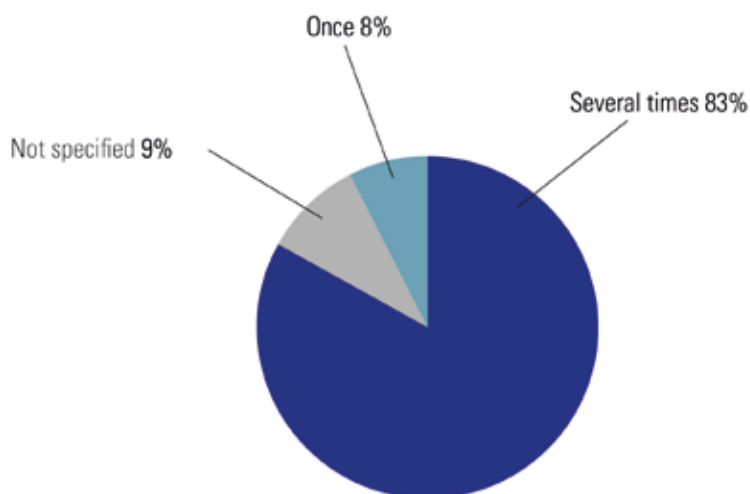
It has already been mentioned that a considerable number of unknown incidents are probable in the case of sexual harassments (see 4.4.3).

### Identity of perpetrators



Most of the Christian refugees (91%/674 people) experience religiously motivated discrimination and/or violence at the hands of their fellow refugees, close to one third of the aggrieved experience (in some cases additionally) violence and/or discrimination at the hands of the security personnel (28%/205). Generally these cases are not individual experiences, actually 83% of all questioned (617) experienced these attacks several times in one or numerous areas.

### Frequency of persecution



» The Muslims in the house discovered that I am Christian because I was reading the Bible. I received death threats. They wanted me to convert back to Islam. The manager of the facility said that he is helpless and cannot protect me. As I feared for my life, I then reported it to a social worker who then wrote a report. The death threats increased. The interpreter tried to trivialise the threats and conceal it from the social welfare department. The department instructed the facility management to make more of an effort to ensure my safety. They were incapable of doing so and therefore I was moved into other accommodation.

– Refugee from Iraq, male



It is obviously not possible to prove in every case if the attack was religiously motivated. The survey has made it very clear though, that a religiously fuelled atmosphere is very prominent in many of these refugee centres and is generally generated by one group within the Muslim majority with whom the other Muslim refugees show solidarity which then intensifies the pressure on religious minorities. The discriminating remarks right through to death threats are usually unknown to the responsible facility operators and social workers due to the existing language barriers, which gives more space for the perpetrators to act with virtual impunity. In many cases the religious motives are clearly visible. Therefore it is safe to say that religion plays a decisive role in the lead up to these attacks.

» *They said: 'You are dumb', 'You are infidels', 'Islam allows us to spill your blood', 'Your breath and your clothes are impure'.*  
– Refugee from Iran, male

» *In the beginning they were all good to us. They then realised that I am a Christian. From that moment on they treated me and my children very badly. They even forbade their children to talk to my children.*  
– Refugee from Iran, female

» *We were surprised when some youngsters suddenly started to scream at us, insulting us and our Christian faith with the most obscene words in the Arabic language. They accused us of insulting Islam and not abiding to the fasting instructions during Ramadan although they knew very well, that we are Christians. They took the dirty water they used to clean with and emptied it over us from the top floor. Just before that five youngsters started to beat my sons with different objects. With a frying pan they also hit me on my head, on the back of my head and my back and I then fell down after they knocked me out. I don't know what happened after that anymore. [...] To this day [17 days later] my statement has still not been recorded.*  
– Refugee from Iraq, female

In many Islamic countries, Christians with a Muslim background belong to the minorities most at risk because apostasy – leaving Islam – is often filed as crime leading to the death sentence. Many of those questi-

oned testified that this perspective, at least partially, is also present within the Muslim refugees.

## 5.4 Handling of attacks

Only in the most rare cases would the aggrieved actually file a complaint (17%/129 people) to the police. If you include the reports and complaints presented to the facility management, then only 28% (213) sought the protection of the German authorities.

54% of those questioned (399) gave specific reasons for not filing any complaints: 48% of them were afraid, especially for fear of repeated attacks or that the situation would even get worse (36%). Other reasons were that there were no safe opportunities to contact or communicate with the police or the respective authorities because of language barriers (14%) and the impression that the report would be pointless anyhow.

## 5.5 Attacks on Yezidis

» Of the 10 Yezidi refugees three of them received death threats, two experienced sexual harassment and five suffered other forms of persecution; six reported that these occurrences took place numerous times. In three cases the perpetrators were fellow refugees and in three further cases the security staffs' relatives were the perpetrators. Five of the victims did not report anything because they deemed it useless. Suggestions made regarding possible improvements to the situation were that four wanted separated accommodation, two would like to have a trustworthy contact person. Even though the numbers examined are smaller, it does illustrate that, in addition to Christian refugees, members from other religious minorities must also be protected.

## 5.6 Structural problems

The following section gives an overview of the structural problems that surface very frequently. The solutions to the problem vary and have been explored to some extent already. Any lasting measures in restraining religiously motivated attacks will depend greatly upon convincing solutions being found regarding these factors.

### 5.6.1 Criminal charges with no results

On 12 February 2016, six Christians were attacked in the refugee centre of Berlin-Tempelhof by a large group of Muslim refugees leading to a legal investigation against several of these perpetrators.<sup>46</sup> On 19 August, Pastor Dr. Gottfried Martens informed Open Doors that the case had been dismissed. After the accused Muslims filed a contradictory accusation claiming the Christians had attacked them and seeing that neither the facility management nor the security staff could deliver ‘further evidence’, it was dismissed as one persons’ word against another. It is often exactly this situation that puts an end to similar cases.

In the meantime Pastor Martens already has over 1,000 converts in his church and due to his commitment and work with refugees he has gained a profound insight in the prevailing conditions. He attended to the six refugees ever since they had been attacked and commented on the procedure:

*“There is not a single case in which Christian refugees in my church had been attacked and injured in their accommodation where the investigation was not dismissed in the end. In every case the attacked Christians word stood against the word of the attackers, who were always in the large majority. [...] In the end, each of the criminal charges only leads to further humiliation of the victims and a loss of confidence in the constitutional state.”<sup>47</sup>*

Another law suit filed against an Afghan Muslim who had been accused of attempted homicide ended with the verdict of not being guilty. He attacked and injured an Iranian convert severely in their shared accommodation with an extendable baton and according to the Iranian’s statement he shouted “Allahu Akbar!” several times. Because none of the witnesses were able to confirm the aforementioned, the judge discharged the case because there were also indications that it could have happened in self-defence. The inflicted Iranian has left Germany in the meantime.<sup>48</sup>

Despite these negative experiences of the legal system, it is necessary to encourage those refugees who have experienced attacks or threats to continue reporting further incidents so that they are documented. That is the only way to compile a complete picture. Perhaps, the law enforcement authorities would then be able to recognise a pattern on which they can act.

### 5.6.2 Discrimination by facility personnel

For the supervision of the massive influx of refugees and asylum seekers over last months a huge amount of staff had to be employed in only a very short period of time. That included interpreters, security personnel, social workers and social supervisors. The latter, especially, do not have the needed qualifications and were mainly, or even exclusively, employed because of their language skills and their migrant background. The same applies to some of the interpreters. They all have a great influence on the cohabitation within the respective facilities and on the asylum procedures of the affected parties. The testimonies of those questioned reveals that even though many of the Muslim co-workers have been living in Germany for several years, they are still very much rooted in their culture and religion – including those characteristics which stand in opposition of the liberal democratic principles in Germany. Many refugees in are thus confronted with structures and behaviour within the accommodation that they were accustomed to in their home countries, i.e. discrimination of those with a different

46 Cf. <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/streit-in-fluechtlingsunterkunft-tempelhof-angriff-auf-christliche-fluechtlinge/13012396.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

47 [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=481415735401468&id=417213035155072](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=481415735401468&id=417213035155072) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

48 Cf. <http://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/hamburg/Angriff-auf-christlichen-Iraner-Freispruch,prozess3332.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

religion. In the case of conflict, a large amount of the Muslim staff show their solidarity towards fellow Muslims, obstruct or trivialise the complaints. Interpreters influence the outcome of the asylum procedures in an unlawful way and sometimes they are even actively involved in the discrimination inside the facilities. The TV magazine "Report Munich" pointed out in one of its programmes "that interpreters are the decisive link between refugees and the authorities who cannot understand their respective languages" and also presented drastic examples where these roles have been abused.<sup>49</sup>

» *I reported the death threats I received to the Info point several times in Persian but they did not react. I reported it two to three times.*  
– Christian from Iran, male

» *I had a problem and reported it at the Info point again and again. There is someone there that always insults our mothers and sister. He said we are "neciz" [impure].*  
– Christian from Iran, male

» *The security service staff are all Arabs and they only help the Arabs. Whenever somebody does something wrong in the accommodation, they say: "It was the Christians" even if we had done nothing.*  
– Christian from Eritrea, male

» *The interpreter himself also voiced death threats*  
– Christian from Iraq, who was seriously threatened on multiple occasions

### 5.6.3 Islamic-influenced structures and mentalities

In the public debate about religiously motivated attacks, the question often arises if it is reasonable to conclude that these attacks occur systematically. The fact is in the various reception centres, Islamic-influenced structures have evolved.

These structures are not to be understood as if they are being planned and installed from above with workforces and an established chain of command. Daily interaction and the desire to secure one's own culture leads to the deepening of accustomed behaviour from the respective home countries. Initially that is a natural occurrence and fully understandable. Outside parties i.e. facility management and social workers, have little insight, not only because of the language barrier but also due to a lack of understanding of the cultures of the relevant countries. Yet if we take a look into the Islamic-dominated countries that many of these refugees come from, and consider how they treat religious minorities, it reveals an understanding of Islam that is most definitely not compatible with the idea of religious freedom and the equality of all people as stipulated in the German constitution. The fact that those who have another religion are thus suffering from the consequences is a normal side effect and well known to many Muslims. Because of their faith, Christians are devalued to second class citizens and branded impure and apostates while enduring constant physical assaults. Often, those Muslims who are responsible for such attacks, are the ones who see themselves bound to the declarations of the Prophet in the Quran. In some cases moderate Muslims named religiously motivated attacks towards persons of other faith and sided with them. Nevertheless, the way of thinking which resides in the Quran, that non-Muslims are infidels and impure is a widespread reality. This understanding of Islam is considered as one of the greatest imaginable goods in those countries where most of the refugees come from. It is considered as the last revelation and striving towards the total submission of all people under Allah. Such a deeply rooted cultural and religious influence can certainly not be placed aside automatically, when someone moves into another cultural environment, but will continue to have a substantial influence on the way the affected refugee will be thinking and acting.

In this context, the survey published by the PEW Forum from 2013 is noteworthy. In the survey they determine the amount of people in different Muslim countries that officially approve of the introduction of

49 Cf. <http://www.br.de/fernsehen/das-erste/sendungen/report-muenchen/videos-und-manuskripte/uebersetzer-fluechtlinge-verrat-102.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

Sharia Law as a legal framework within their borders. It showed that 83% of the Moroccan population, 84% of the Pakistani, 91% of the Iraqi and even 99% of the Afghan population supported Sharia law. In comparison, the statistical data delivered by BAMF (German department for migration and refugees) depicts that the main countries of origin for those seeking asylum are Afghanistan, ranked second and Iraq third in the current year (2016).<sup>51</sup> On the current Open doors World watch list Iraq is ranked second, Afghanistan fourth, Syria fifth, and Iran ninth. They are all ranked as the top 10 countries where Christians are being persecuted the most.<sup>52</sup>

When looking at this subject, is important to state that the assaults do not necessarily end once the refugees leave the accommodation to enter into a settled life. For this purpose, an example from Berlin, recounted by Pastor Dr. Martens:

*"In the meantime the conflicts are gradually being transferred onto the streets: Just this evening, a man from my church told me, that on Saturday night he had been attacked by several men who asked him, while walking on the street, if he is a Christian. When he confirmed they started cussing in Arabic and beat him up. The fact that the members of his congregation are asked if they are Christians and subsequently insulted and attacked are no longer mere isolated incidents. Unfortunately it is of no use to try and lay any charges. That seems to be the sad truth, most probably not only in Berlin!"<sup>53</sup>*

Another case was reported to Open Doors on 23 August in Maintal in Hesse:

*"Last Tuesday [meaning the 16 August, Ed.]<sup>54</sup> a group consisting of four Afghan refugees, one refugee from*

*Darmstadt and three in Maintal, were lurking in front of the home of a Muslim background Christian living in Maintal, and who himself came to Germany as a refugee from Afghanistan several years ago. After he left his home in the evening the four attackers came out of hiding screaming "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is greater) and beating him up. The Christian tried to break free and escape several times while crying for help. The attackers kept on dragging him in to continue kicking and punching him.*

*Then some of the attackers screamed "kill him" in Afghan and continued to shout "Allahu Akbar" when one of the attackers then drew a knife and charged at him. That was when some of the residents left their homes and tried to intervene, screaming and shouting aloud.*

*It was during this tussle that the attacked Christian managed to escape into the stairway of his house. When the police arrived they managed to search and take the personal details of three of the four attackers. The fourth attacker, who drew the knife, managed to escape.*

*The victim was taken to hospital and taken care of. The courageous intervention of the residents and the swift arrival of the police prevented worse from happening. Before this happened, the Christian had been warned by other refugees still living in the Maintal refugee Centre. They told him that there are house-mates inside the accommodation who are planning to assault him because they found out that he had converted (while he was abroad) to Christianity. He never reckoned that they would attack him outside of the refugee centre, right in front of his house. This is already the third time that he has been assaulted because of his faith in Jesus Christ. Because of his faith, he also receives death threats and insults every now and then."<sup>55</sup>*

50 Cf. <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-exec> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

51 Cf. [http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asyl/201608-statistik-anlage-asyl-geschaeftsbericht.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asyl/201608-statistik-anlage-asyl-geschaeftsbericht.pdf?__blob=publicationFile) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

52 Cf. [http://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/country\\_profiles.php](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/country_profiles.php) (retrieved on 11.10.2016)

53 [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=481415735401468&id=417213035155072](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=481415735401468&id=417213035155072) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

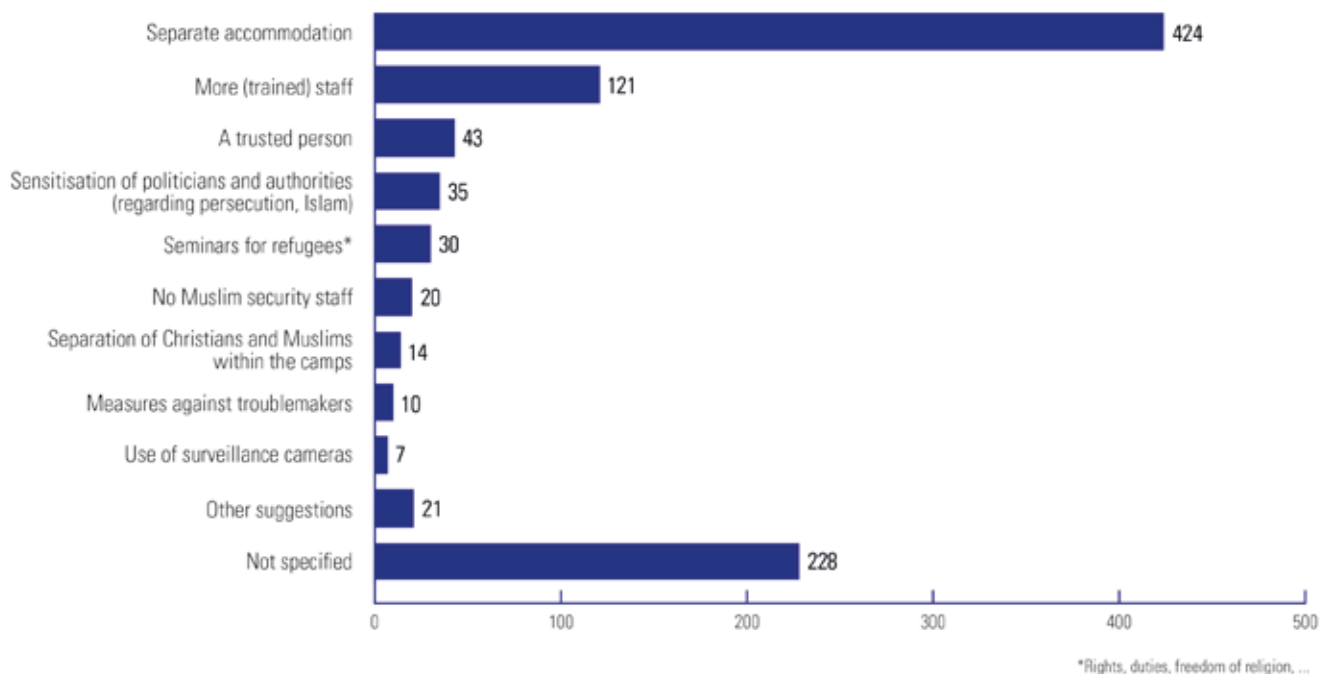
### 5.6.4 Lack of Sensitisation of religious motives

The employed staff of the authorities, accommodations and police are frequently not appropriately sensitised towards religiously motivated attacks and therefore not able to access the background of the incidents in a suitable manner (also see 3.1)

## 5.7 The victims' recommendations

The questioned participants, who had been victimised before were asked to conclude with a recommendation regarding those security improvements they see fit. 69% of those questioned (515 people) made recommendations. Separate accommodation was the most frequent answer (57%/424). Other than that, 16% of those questioned (121) were in favour of better instructed personnel and 6% (43) desired a trustworthy person they could confide in. 5% (35) suggested the necessity to sensitise the responsible parties regarding topics such as persecution and Islam, while another 4% (30) suggested training courses for the refugees. The course includes modules on a citizen's rights and duties in Germany, especially those laws concerning religious freedom that are rooted in the German constitution.

### Most frequent recommendations of participating refugees on how to increase security



54 The Email correspondence with the victimised Christian refugee and his supervisor available to Open Doors states that the attack took place on 17 August, 2016 between 11 and 11.15 pm. The Maintal police is currently conducting the investigative procedures.



## 6 The unique situation of converts

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Even though the percentage of converts questioned were certainly fewer compared with those registered during the first survey in May 2016, it can clearly be documented that the lives of converts who changed from Islam to Christianity are exceedingly in danger. They are often not only perceived as apostates, but are also seen as having betrayed their people and even all of the Muslim world. That is why it is not only legitimate for those Muslims who follow this train of thought, but even required to take action against such 'apostates'. In individual cases it goes so far that converts tend to find themselves in life threatening situations. An example for that is the previously mentioned assault on an Iranian Christian in Hamburg in May 2016 (see 5.6.1).

The fact that the right to change ones religion is a controversial discussion in the field of religious freedom is nothing new and in the UN general assembly it has already been the topic of discussion several times. Several members from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation over the years regularly presented a resolution against the 'defamation of religions', which could have been used officially against converts (as 'ultimate offenders of Islam'). It was only after the extensive international pressure from numerous Non-Governmental Organisations that many states recognised how the resolution actually threatened religious freedom, thus denying their request in 2011 once again.

This digression in international politics reveals that especially converts and the right to choose (and to change) one's religion at will, must unquestionably be protected. This applies all the more so when religious minorities seek help and protection and turn to a country like Germany where the right to practise religious freedom is a guaranteed constitutional right.



## 7 The first survey – retrospective and reactions

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After appealing to the German authorities and politicians to act against religiously motivated attacks, repeatedly, but to no avail, Open Doors then decided to investigate these cases towards the end of 2015. The objective was to acquire a swift and reliable database on this topic and present it to the politicians in charge so that they would have a sound basis from which they could take action in protecting Christian refugees and other religious minorities. The collection of the data took place between 15 February and 15 April 2016.

The report, which was released on the 9 May<sup>56</sup>, raised attention across-the-board, both in print and electronic media (see the press review<sup>57</sup>) while the English edition also prompted European interest. The press took the testimonies of the aggrieved seriously and underlined the appeal of the involved parties towards the government to take action. A detailed piece in the Frankfurter Newspaper (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung – FAZ) which was released on the 10 May 2016 under the title “Stop overlooking the Christians!”<sup>58</sup> is an example of this. Shortly afterwards, an article from another journalist at the same newspaper directed a number of critical questions at the survey which were answered extensively and released on the Open Doors website.<sup>59</sup>

Five months have passed since then, but no substantial improvement can be observed. Also the letter that has been sent to the German Chancellor on the same day the press conference took place, in which the situation of Christian refugees and other religious minorities in the refugee centres was described and the request to take action, has not yet been answered.

Nevertheless, up to this point a number of valuable ventures have already been explored, which will be outlined in the following chapter. They demonstrate that it is possible to counter these infringements successfully even if it is a great challenge.

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56 Cf. [https://www.opendoors.de/downloads/Berichte/Open\\_Doors\\_Bericht\\_Religioes\\_motivierte\\_Uebergriffe\\_gegen\\_christliche\\_Fluechlinge\\_in\\_Deutschland.pdf](https://www.opendoors.de/downloads/Berichte/Open_Doors_Bericht_Religioes_motivierte_Uebergriffe_gegen_christliche_Fluechlinge_in_Deutschland.pdf) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

57 [https://www.opendoors.de/verfolgung/christenverfolgung\\_heute/christenverfolgung\\_in\\_deutschland/pressespiegel\\_fluechtlingsbericht/](https://www.opendoors.de/verfolgung/christenverfolgung_heute/christenverfolgung_in_deutschland/pressespiegel_fluechtlingsbericht/) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

58 <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/debatten/fluechtlingspolitik-vergessst-die-christen-nicht-14223590.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

59 Cf. [https://www.opendoors.de/verfolgung/presse/pressemeldungen/2016/keine\\_zweifel\\_an\\_christenverfolgung\\_in\\_fluechtlingsheimen/](https://www.opendoors.de/verfolgung/presse/pressemeldungen/2016/keine_zweifel_an_christenverfolgung_in_fluechtlingsheimen/) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

# 8 Positive approaches in preventing religiously motivated attacks

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The organisations which contributed to this survey are not seeking to avenge the attacks or the punishment of the perpetrators. This is implicit and necessary in order to ensure that justice is done to the victims and their trust in the rule of law is restored. The primary goal of the survey is rather to ensure targeted prevention of problems in order to protect religious minorities. As already demonstrated in the first report, it is not only fellow refugees but also camp managers, security staff, interpreters, all the way up to inadequately informed authorities, who actively or passively contribute to the violence. Since the publication of the first report in May there have been some positive approaches which could partly contribute to improving the protection of religious minorities. Some of these measures are presented in the following section and could serve as first steps towards establishing better prevention.

## 8.1 Berlin

Berlin reacted to the problem of violent attacks on religious minorities in refugee camps and launched its “Masterplan Integration and Security”<sup>60</sup> from 24 May 2015. Point 8.5.3 of the plan covers “protection of religious minorities against violence”:

*“Religious minorities, e.g. Christians and Yezidis, are affected by discrimination and persecution in some Muslim countries. These conflicts sometimes continue in asylum shelters and places of refuge, where security staff are not prepared to react adequately. The senate recognises its responsibility to take appropriate measures to ensure that refugees belonging to religious min-*

*orities in their countries of origin will find protection from discrimination and violence in our city. This issue and respective measures should become part of the basic laws on the operation of refugee shelters in Berlin (quality standards).”<sup>61</sup>*

Open Doors’ first report already revealed substantial problems, especially in refugee camps in the area of Berlin. The fact that the need for protection of religious minorities is officially recognised is commendable, the implementation, however, seems very incomplete in comparison to the catalogue of measures published by the Home Office of Hesse. When Open Doors enquired on 8 August 2016, the Berlin Senate answered as follows:

*“The quality management of the State Office for Refugee Matters (Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten) continually gives attention to ensuring an unbiased and culturally sensitive approach to asylum seekers and encourages positive relationships. It gives advice to camp managers and recommends restrictive measures in specific cases of infringement. During its visits the quality management of the State Office for Refugee Matters examines if security and other staff in the refugee camps have the required certificates for their work (‘polizeiliches Führungszeugnis’).”<sup>62</sup>*

In addition, it was pointed out that a series of training courses, including ‘Quality control in refugee shelters’ were made available for facility staff.

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60 Cf. <https://www.berlin.de/rbmskzl/aktuelles/pressemitteilungen/2016/pressemitteilung.480504.php> (retrieved on 01.10.2016)

61 Download on: <https://www.berlin.de/rbmskzl/aktuelles/politik-aktuell/2016/meldung.480539.php> (retrieved on 01.10.2016)

62 E-Mail of the Landesamtes für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten, Berlin to Markus Rode (CEO Open Doors Germany), 06.09.2016

## 8.2 Stuttgart

The provision of asylum shelters is the responsibility of the German municipalities. Some of them have taken measures to prevent attacks on Christian refugees. The city of Stuttgart, for example, provided a separate camp for Christian refugees in the Neuge-reut district, as early as February 2016. At the same time the authorities emphasised that the city would continue with its policy of avoiding separate accommodation based on ethnic origin or religion.<sup>63</sup>

## 8.3 Bad Homburg

Ulrich Krebs, administrative head of the district of Hochtaunus, reacted immediately when Christian refugees were attacked on 7 November 2015 and released the accused Muslim security staff from their duties.<sup>64</sup>

## 8.4 Rotenburg a. d. Fulda

In a branch camp of the initial reception centre of Hesse, Afghan Muslims repeatedly attacked Iranian Christian refugees. When the situation escalated in early June 2016 and the police had to intervene, the Christian refugees not only wrote a letter of complaint to the police, but the management immediately agreed to separate the groups to different locations within the accommodation. Moreover, a catalogue of measures was developed in order to prevent further violent incidences.

The example of Rotenburg with approximately 700 refugees shows clearly that these kinds of attacks are not individual cases. Almost all of the Christian refugees in the initial reception centre Hesse were affected (32 out of the 49 Christian refugees living in the camps filled in a questionnaire, others were not ready to do so – partly out of fear of further reprisals against them or their families). Furthermore, special protective measures were taken (safe environment for interviews, guaranteed anonymity) so that a high number of victims were willing to share their experiences (documentation of these incidents will be available on <http://www.opendoors.de/bericht-rotenburg-2016-english> from 24 October 2016.)

## 8.5 Schloß Holte-Stukenbrock/ Guetersloh district

In a tent camp for refugees, 14 Iranian Christians have suffered from discrimination for months. Some of them had death threats and had their Bibles taken away and destroyed. Finally, their situation became so dangerous that they sought refuge at a nearby church. Only after this incident and rising pressure by several volunteers did local authorities intervene and promise to move the Christian refugees to Herford. Unfortunately, the perpetrators were part of a group of 140 refugees who were transferred to the new shelter; consequently the whole situation remained unchanged.<sup>65</sup> At this point, district authorities insisted that the Christian refugees name the perpetrators, which they did as best as they could (giving descrip-

63 Cf. <http://www.stuttgarter-nachrichten.de/inhalt.mobbing-unter-fluechtlingen-30-christen-duerfen-in-unterkunft-in-neuge-reut.38b2fed3-60fb-4c07-9b10-59411d02995d.html> (retrieved on 01.10.2016)

64 Cf. <http://www.fr-online.de/zuwanderung-in-rhein-main/vorfall-in-oberursel-schutz-fuer-christliche-fluechtlinge,24933504,33564148.html> (retrieved on 01.10.2016)

65 Cf. <http://www.idea.de/menschenrechte/detail/bedrohte-iranische-christen-sind-in-sicherheit-97975.html> (retrieved on 01.10.2016)

tions like “a tall man with long hair from tent 21”<sup>66</sup>). This is an illustration of the problems Open Doors already highlighted in its first report. Reporting incidents of violence to local authorities often does not change the situation and can even make it worse.

When a citizen then turned to Jürgen Müller, the administrative head of the district of Herford. The latter contacted the competent district authorities in Detmold on 8 August and promised to find a rapid solution. This solution was finally found, according to a media report of 25 August.<sup>67</sup>

in early June the police established the identity of six key persons including the leader of the 30 Muslims, a “self-styled Imam”. The victims of the attack were moved to a different camp.<sup>69</sup> The ARD-programme presented a further case in the Munich area. A camp manager moved Christian converts out of a camp during Ramadan on his own initiative, because they had asked for it. The camp manager asked to remain anonymous. When he had heard that some staff from the security company sympathised with ISIS, he decided independently to take precautions (which were not officially authorised).

## 8.6 Rottach-Egern

A fight on 7 June 2016 in the asylum shelter Rottach-Egern prompted a police investigation. The responsible district administration confirmed to ARD (TV station) that some of the residents of the refugee camp were extremist Muslims who were prone to violence.

Journalists of the ARD-magazine ‘Report München’ gained access to an official letter from local authorities describing the increasing radicalisation of a group of about 30 people who systematically took action against other refugees in the camp. Spokesperson Birger Nemitz told Report München that there was “a structure of intolerance, because [the perpetrators] do not accept any other forms of life or lifestyles.”<sup>68</sup> Hubert Hörterer, a doctor involved in the camp and one of the coordinators of a group of volunteers, said that the volunteers were informed about a systematic structure behind the attacks. After the incident

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66 Cf. [http://www.nw.de/lokal/kreis\\_guetersloh/schloss\\_holte\\_stukenbrock/schloss\\_holte\\_stukenbrock/20875670\\_Muslime-bedrohen-junge-iranische-Christen-massiv.html](http://www.nw.de/lokal/kreis_guetersloh/schloss_holte_stukenbrock/schloss_holte_stukenbrock/20875670_Muslime-bedrohen-junge-iranische-Christen-massiv.html) (retrieved on 01.10.2016)

67 Cf. <http://www.idea.de/menschenrechte/detail/bedrohte-iranische-christen-sind-in-sicherheit-97975.html> (retrieved on 01.10.2016)

68 Report München, broadcast, July 12, 2016

69 Cf. <https://tegenseerstimme.de/radikale-gruppe-attackierte-christen/216549.html> (retrieved on 01.10.2016)

# 9 Attacks on refugees in other EU-States

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Germany has taken in the highest number of refugees among all European countries.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, it seems self-evident that the issue of religiously motivated attacks is likely to occur there the most. Nevertheless similar incidents have also been reported from other European countries showing: The need to act is not limited to Germany, instead it concerns all of Europe. The following reports provide exemplary evidence to this.

## 9.1 Austria

### **Syrian Christians gain bitter experience in Austrian asylum shelters<sup>71</sup>**

Christian Solidarity International (CSI) interviewed four Christian refugees from Syria who gave accounts of discrimination and violence they had suffered in asylum shelters dominated by Muslim refugees due to their faith. Their experience ranged from harassment, being forced to participate in Muslim rituals through to violent attacks because they had read their Bibles.

*“One day one of them [Muslim refugees] discovered the small cross necklace I’m wearing. That’s when the bullying started: We three Christians had to submit to their Islamic rituals, pray at sunrise, have breakfast at 6am and so on.”*

Another one reported that he had to share rooms with a fighter from the Free Syrian Army, a mullah and four IS-sympathizers in a shelter in Upper Austria. *“Such a thing never even happened to me at home: But now, in a strange land, I am forced to live under the same roof with such radicals!”*

## 9.2 Switzerland

### **Christian refugees threatened and harassed<sup>72</sup>**

Laut der Beratungsstelle Integrations- und Religionsfragen (BIR) der Schweizerischen Evangelischen Allianz leiden Nichtmuslime, vor allem jene, die vom Islam zum christlichen Glauben konvertiert sind, in Schweizer Flüchtlingszentren. Im Kanton Bern wurden zwei afghanische Christen massiv von Muslimen bedroht. In der Ostschweiz befasste sich die BIR mit dem Fall eines konvertierten jungen Flüchtlings, der in der Schule massivem Mobbing vonseiten muslimischer Mitschüler ausgesetzt war.

## 9.3 France

### **Iranian Christians at Grande-Synthe<sup>73</sup>**

In January 2016, the public learned about violent incidents directed against Christian refugees at Grande-Synthe, a camp in Northern France. Regarding the general situation of the Iranian-Christian minority, labour union leader David Michaux confirmed that there was a real problem between Muslims and non-Muslims. “The Muslims are trying to drive the Christians out from the camp.”

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70 Cf. [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:First\\_time\\_asylum\\_applicants,\\_Q2\\_2015\\_%E2%80%93\\_Q2\\_2016.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:First_time_asylum_applicants,_Q2_2015_%E2%80%93_Q2_2016.png) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

71 [http://www.csi.or.at/images/CiN/CiN\\_05\\_2016\\_PRINT\\_HP.pdf](http://www.csi.or.at/images/CiN/CiN_05_2016_PRINT_HP.pdf) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

72 <http://www.blick.ch/news/ausland/muslime-gegen-christen-religionskrieg-in-fluechtlingsheimen-id5017193.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

73 <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2016/01/26/01016-20160126ARTFIG00377-une-quarantaine-de-coups-de-feu-tires-dans-la-jungle-de-grande-synthe.php> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

### **Murder because of conversion to the Christian faith**<sup>74</sup>

In another case, violence and even a murder took place. In December 2015 a group of Iranian Christians were attacked at Grande-Synthe. One young man suffered a broken nose, another one was stabbed with a knife. "They attacked us and called us 'kafir' (unbelievers) and dirty. They came, hurt me with a knife and beat my friends", one of the victims reported. Another one called Mohamed was abducted and killed because he had converted to the Christian faith. One of his friends reported, that Mohamed's throat was cut and the body buried at the murder site. As the Iranian refugee said, there were more Christians in the camp but they were too afraid to confess their faith.

## 9.4 United Kingdom

### **Archbishop Nichols: UK bypasses Christian refugees**<sup>75</sup>

In England, Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, warned that the current refugee policy of the country could in fact lead to the indirect discrimination of Christians from crisis areas. The approach of purely bringing refugees from UNHCR camps to the UK was responsible for bypassing Christians who have turned to Christian organisations instead of the UNHCR in search of refuge.

### **Muslim shopkeeper murdered after posting Easter greetings to Christians**<sup>76</sup>

In Glasgow, Muslim shopkeeper Asad Shah was stabbed to death by another Muslim in a religiously motivated attack. A few hours before the attack Shah had posted Easter greetings to his "beloved Christian

nation" on his Facebook account. "Let's follow the real footsteps of beloved holy Jesus Christ and get the real success in both worlds" his message read. A suspect named Tanveer Ahmed was arrested and subsequently admitted his religious motivation for the attack. According to Ahmed, Shah had insulted Islam and pretended to be a prophet.

## 9.5 Sweden

### **„They Are Persecuted Again – This Time in Europe“**<sup>77</sup>

In Sweden, the independent journalist and writer Nuri Kino laments the government's intransigence regarding the persecution of Christian refugees in asylum shelters. While the Swedish parliament voted against recognising the treatment of Christians, Yazidis and other religious minorities as well as moderate Muslims in the crisis areas as genocide, Christians are experiencing continued religious persecution, already known to them from their home countries this time in Europe's, and particularly Sweden's, refugee shelters, Kino argues. He tells the example of a Christian family who had to be evacuated from a Swedish asylum shelter because of harassment.

### **Christians flee from asylum shelter after threats by Islamists**<sup>78</sup>

One of Sweden's biggest newspapers reported on a group of Christian refugees who had to be transferred from a facility in Kalmar to another shelter after receiving threats and being harassed by Islamists. The issue was discussed by the Swedish parliament.

74 <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2016/01/28/01016-20160128ARTFIG00345--des-migrants-iraniens-de-grande-synthe-ont-demande-le-bapteme.php> and <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/02/4305685> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

75 <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-35173982> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

76 <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-35173982> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

77 [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nuri-kino/they-are-persecuted-again\\_b\\_10027104.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nuri-kino/they-are-persecuted-again_b_10027104.html) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

78 <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/kristna-flyktingar-flyttade-fran-asyloboende-efter-hot-av-islamister/> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

**Death threat sprayed on a wall**<sup>79</sup>

A Pakistani couple who had converted to the Christian faith were being harassed by Muslim fellow residents in western Sweden. When their name was sprayed to a wall along with a death threat, both of them fled to a local church since the couple stated they had not received any protection from local migration institutes.

**Taken to court because of religiously motivated violence**<sup>80</sup>

In Borgholm, a 26-year-old Syrian was arrested on suspicion of religiously motivated violence. He was accused of having threatened and beaten a 16-year-old Christian. In his possession the police found videos showing his activities in the Syrian war. Before this, the man had been convicted on probation by two courts because of death threats against Christians.

## 9.6 The Netherlands

**Christian flees from asylum shelter due to harassment**<sup>81</sup>

A Pakistani Christian fled from an asylum shelter because of continuous harassment. He had been denied access to the kitchen since his meat had supposedly not been 'halal' (religiously acceptable) and had also been attacked by his fellow resident. When it was proposed that he change rooms upon his complaint, he replied: "Of course I can do that, but what then is the difference between Pakistan and the Netherlands?"

## 9.7 Italy

**Christian refugees dumped into the sea**<sup>82</sup>

When a boat carrying African refugees encountered distress at sea, Christians were dumped into the water and drowned. A young Nigerian Christian had started to pray causing some Muslim fellow refugees to threaten him by saying: "Here we only pray to Allah!" An eyewitness reported to La Repubblica: "They told him that they were going to throw him overboard unless he stopped praying to God. Then they began to shout and two of them pushed him off the boat. He fell into the sea and drowned." After this, the other Christians in the boat were also attacked and forced overboard. 12 Christians altogether died. The Italian police arrested 15 persons, one of the being a murder suspect.

**Violence in the "ghetto" Rignano Garganico**<sup>83</sup>

Italian media reported on violence against a group of Catholic refugees from Africa at Rignano Garganico, the largest ghetto of the Italian region Apulia. Although Christians living there are separated from the Muslims, violent attacks do occur. Two years ago the only church in the Christian housing area was burned down and to date has not been reconstructed. In fear of their lives, Christians only pray in secret now.

79 <http://www.dagen.se/hotad-pa-asylboende-flyttade-till-kyrka-1.421974> and <http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/christian-converts-harassed-at-swedish-asylum-center.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

80 <http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/syrian-arrested-on-suspicion-of-beating-and-threatening-16-year-old.html>, <http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/sunni-muslim-threatens-to-kill-christian-syrian-in-kalmar-accommodation.html> and <http://www.ostrasmaland.se/kalmar/jag-ska-skara-halsen-av-dig/?share=eyJkYXRhIjp7InVybCI6Imh0dHA6XC9cL3d3dy5vc3RyYXNtYWxhbmQuc2VcL2thbG1hclwvamFnLXNrYS1za2FyYS1oYWxzZW4tYXYtZGlnXC8iLCJ0dGwiOiIxNDQ0NjMwNjcwliwidXNlcl9pZCI6IjU0MmUzNGFhYTY3MjAxOTMwYjAwMGE5NSJ> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

81 <http://www.rd.nl/christelijke-asielzoeker-ontvlucht-azc-uit-angst-voor-moslims-1.478405> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

82 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3044584/Pray-Allah-Il-throw-overboard-Muslims-ordered-Christians-punctured-dinghy-African-migrants-sank-Mediterranean.html> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

83 [http://espresso.repubblica.it/inchieste/2016/08/18/news/apocalisse-in-puglia-un-pezzo-del-paese-oltre-ogni-umanita-1.280688?refresh\\_ce](http://espresso.repubblica.it/inchieste/2016/08/18/news/apocalisse-in-puglia-un-pezzo-del-paese-oltre-ogni-umanita-1.280688?refresh_ce) (retrieved on 06.10.2016)



## 9.8 Spain

### **Christian refugees thrown overboard and drowned<sup>84</sup>**

In Spain, a migrant from Cameroon has been indicted of having murdered six Christian refugees. The accused and captain of a boat supposedly blamed a Catholic priest for the rough sea during the passage. He beat the priest with a sharp piece of wood and threw him overboard. Subsequently he and another refugee searched all other boat passengers for any items identifying them as Christians and subsequently dumped another five Christians into the sea. The state prosecutor has charged him of premeditated murder.

## 9.9 Greece

As part of a survey on the situation of Christian refugees in Greece the International Christian Consulate interviewed 65 Christian refugees, most of them Iranian converts to Christianity who had fled their home country due to religious persecution. Nearly all of the affected had experienced threats and violence because of their Christian faith. They told of beatings, daily death threats and intimidation, threats at knife-point, gang rapes as well as destruction of tents and their property. A doctor working in the Greek refugee shelters confirmed their statements, saying: “[The Christian refugees] are being seriously threatened because they are forthright about their faith and that is extraordinarily dangerous in these camps. [...] These camps are like mini-Iran or mini-Afghanistan, with the same persecution as what they left in their home countries. I can see that even from what I’m looking at medically.”<sup>85</sup> Christos Psaltis, a political officer with the UK Embassy in Athens, stated that there was a general lack of understanding of minority issues such as were presented for the Christians. The Greek-Orthodox Church also expressed concern for the Christians’ safety.<sup>86</sup>

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84 <https://www.clarionproject.org/news/muslim-militants-go-door-door-killing-christians#>, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/09/19/muslim-migrant-boat-captain-faces-murder-charges-for-pushing-chr/> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

85 ICC Greece Report: Christian Refugees in Greece Urgently in Need of Safe Haven, 2016, page 7. See: <http://www.internationalchristian-consulate.com/resources1/research> (retrieved on 06.10.2016)

86 *ibid.*, page 6



# 10 Conclusions and demands

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There must be no more 'integration experiments' at the expense of Christian refugees and other religious minorities in German asylum and reception centres. Therefore, the collaborating organisations AVC, EMG, Open Doors and ZOCD are asking the Chancellor, the ministers in charge of home affairs, education and social affairs on a federal as well as state level, the Commissioner for integration and other regional and trans-regional authorities to swiftly implement the following measures:

1. Preventive measures ensuring the protection of religious minorities during the entire process of asylum-seeking and integration (cf. catalogue of measures of the Hessian ministry of Home Affairs, see 3.3.4)
2. Merging groups from religious minorities in such a way so that the proportion of Christians and other religious minorities roughly corresponds with that of Muslims in shared accommodation.
3. Provision of separate accommodation for Christians and other religious minorities who have already been victims of persecution and discrimination. This should include the possibility of decentralised accommodation. Authorities must refrain from categorically blocking decentralised accommodation, especially if such living quarters are available for affected Christians.
4. Adequately increasing the non-Muslim percentage of the security staff.
5. Provision of periodical training for sensitising co-workers and security staff assigned to refugee shelters to the reasons behind religious conflicts and the protection of religious minorities.
6. Assignment of Christian persons of trust whom Christians can turn to when affected by persecution.

Along with these basic requests, complementary measures with practical relevance need to be developed. This could be done by a task force which should include affected refugees and envoys from groups that are experienced in working with refugees (e.g. migrant churches as well as German churches that have shown particular engagement in helping refugees and/or converts; as well as groups representing oriental Christians and churches like the ZOCD). This task force could also discuss topics such as the recognition of the need to protect religious minorities, ways for facility managers and operators to resolve conflict situations and implement effective measures to prevent attacks.

Open Doors is grateful to all politicians who have shown considerable engagement for Christians and other religious minorities persecuted throughout the world. This report is being presented in the hope that all those who are experiencing aggression and persecution in refugee centres in Germany would also benefit from such decisive engagement and subsequently be granted urgently needed protection.

# Appendix

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## Appendix 1: Blank questionnaire

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### Contact Information

Needs to be filled out by the contact person of the refugee in germany

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions for refugees

Personal data collected with this questionnaire will be used purely for internal purposes and will not be published or transferred to third parties!

1. Contact to person responsible since (year): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name (The name will not be published! If needed please note down an alias):  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Age (date of birth if known): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Gender:

- a. male
- b. female

5. Place of birth (Country/City): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Did you convert to Christianity from another faith?

- a. yes
- b. no

7. Where did you find faith?

- a. in Germany
- b. in your home country
- c. in another country

8. Where do you live currently? (name of shelter/city/federal state)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee

9. Is it your first German refugee housing?

- a. yes
- b. no

10. Which types of religiously motivated violence have you experienced at the hands of **fellow refugees** in Germany? (please mark)

	never	once	several times	In current residence? (if not, note below 10.2.)	Reported at least once (internal administration)	Reported at least once (police)
Death threats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other persecution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks about „other persecution“:

10.1. Date of incident or time-period of incidents occurring:

---

10.2. Refugee housing in which the incidents took place (name of housing/city/federal state):

---

Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee

11. Which types of religiously motivated violence did you experience by **guards** in Germany? (please mark)

	never	once	several times	In current residence? (if not, note below 11.2.)	Reported at least once (internal administration)	Reported at least once (police)
Death threats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other persecution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks about „Other persecution“:

11.1. Date of incident or time-period of incidents occurring:

---

11.2. Refugee housing in which the incidents took place (name of housing/city/federal state):

---

Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee

12. Which types of religiously motivated violence did you experience at the hands of **other (not yet mentioned) parties** in Germany? (please mark)

Who was persecuting? \_\_\_\_\_

	never	once	several times	In current residence? (if not, note below 12.2.)	Reported at least once (internal administration)	Reported at least once (police)
Death threats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other persecution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks about "other persecution":

12.1. Date of incident or time-period of incidents occurring:

---

12.2. Refugee housing in which the incidents took place (name of housing/city/federal state):

---

13. If incident were reported, did the refugee housing's internal administration or police act on it and take measures to protect you against further assaults?

	never	sometimes	each time
Internal administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
police	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>


Official police report number concerning the incident/incidents (if known):

---

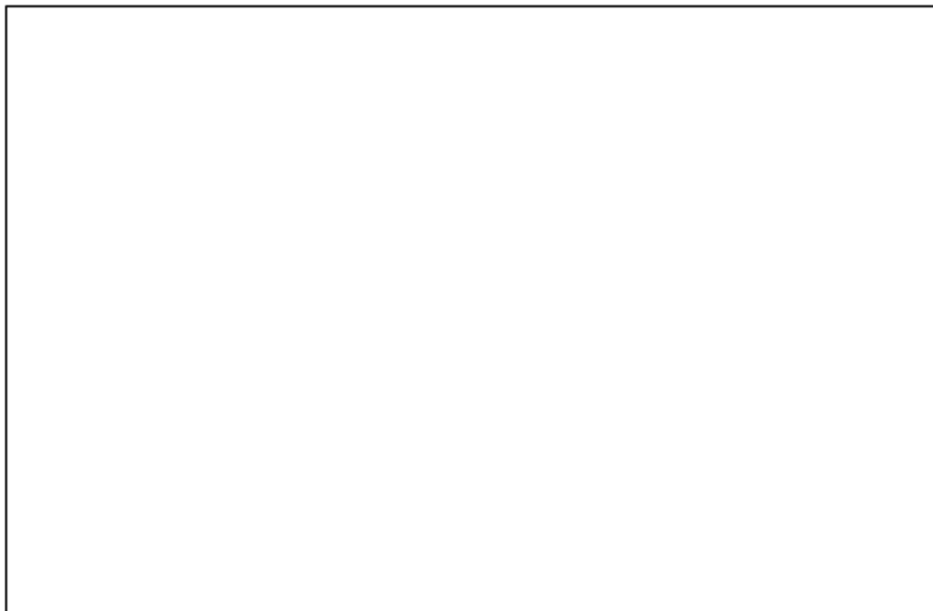
Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee

14. Reasons why incident/incidents were not reported:

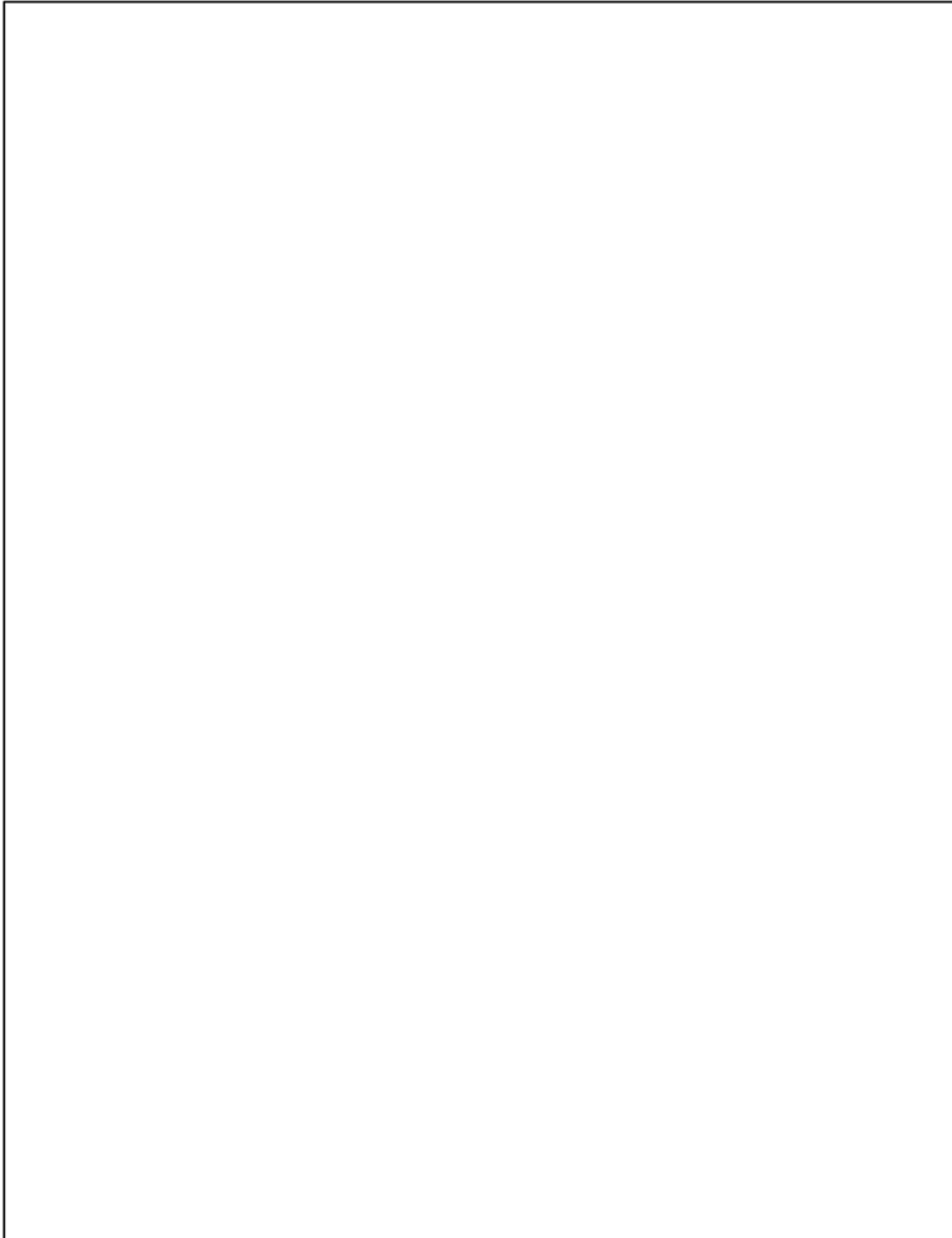


15. What ways do you suggest could help protect you better as a Christian against religiously motivated assaults in refugee housing?



Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee



**Thank you for your help and may God bless you!**

Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee



## Appendix 1: Completed questionnaire in Arabic

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### Contact Information

Needs to be filled out by the contact person of the refugee in germany

First name:

Name:

Church:

City:

Tel. number:

E-Mail

### Questions for refugees اسئلة للاجئين

Personal data collected with this questionnaire will be used purely for internal purposes and will not be published or transferred to third parties!  
هذه المعلومات التي سيتم جمعها من خلال هذه الاستمارة ستستخدم لأهداف داخلية ولن يتم نشرها أو مشاركتها مع طرف ثالث.

- Contact to person responsible since (year): (المرجع المسؤول منذ (عام) 2016)
- Name (The name will not be published! If needed please note down an alias): (الاسم (الاسم لن يتم نشره! يمكن الاستعانة باسم مستعار) [Redacted])
- Age (Date of birth if known): (العمر (وتاريخ الميلاد) 27)
- Gender: /الجنس
  - Male/ ذكر
  - Female/انثى
- Place of birth(Country/City): (الدولة والمحافظه) SYR / [Redacted]
- Did you convert to Christianity from another faith? هل اهدتيت الى المسيحية بعد ان كنت ملتزماً بدين آخر
  - Yes نعم
  - No كلا
- Where did you find faith? اين وجدت الايمان
  - in Germany في المانيا
  - in your home country في بلدك الأم
  - in another country في بلد آخر
- Where do you live currently? (name of shelter/city/federal state) اين تعيش حالياً ( اسم الملجأ / المدينة/دولة فدرال) [Redacted]

9. Is it your first German refugee housing? هل هذا هو الملجأ الألماني الأول لك؟

- a. Yes نعم  
b. No كلا

10. Which types of religiously motivated violence have you experienced at the hands of fellow refugees in Germany? (please mark)

ما هي اشكال العنف التي تعرضت لها بسبب انتمائك الديني على يد زملائك اللاجئين في ألمانيا (رجاء وضع علامة)

	Never ابداً	Once مرة واحدة	several times عدة مرات	In current residence? (if not, note below 10.2.) في مقرّ الحالي (لذكر عنوان آخر دونه ضمن فقرة 10.2)	Reported at least once (internal administration) تم الإبلاغ عنه على الأقل مرة واحدة (للإدارة الدولية)	Reported at least once (police) تم الإبلاغ عنه على الأقل مرة واحدة (للشرطة)
Death threats تهديدات بالموت	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault ايهاتات جنسية	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent assault ايهاتات عنيفة	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other persecution اشكال اخرى من الاضطهاد	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks about „other persecution“ : ملاحظات حول أنواع اشكال آخر من الاضطهاد

الارتكاف بالكفر والوثنية وقذف الرصنة الدينية المسيحية بالاسما ثم  
دعوات تحويلهم للإسلام وفي آخر المرات طلبوا مني وضع  
هزيمة لجورد سكني معهم في نفس الغرفة ثم تحويلهم لزرع رغبتهم غايتهم الجديدة

10.1. Date of incident or time-period of incidents occurring: تاريخ الحدث أو المدة التي جرى فيها الاضطهاد.

2016

10.2. Refugee housing in which the incidents took place (name of housing/city/federal state):

عنوان الملجأ أو المقرّ الذي تمت فيه هذه الاحداث (اسم المقرّ/ المدينة/ دولة فديرالية)

Seite 4 von 7

11. Which types of religiously motivated violence did you experience by **guards** in Germany? (please mark)

ما هي أشكال العنف التي تعرضت لها بسبب انتمائك الديني على يد الحرس في ألمانيا. (رجاءً ضع علامة)

	never أبداً	Once مرة واحدة	several times عدة مرات	In current residence? (if not, note below 11.2.) في مقرّق الحالي (لذكر عنوان آخر دونه ضمن فقرة 11.2)	Reported at least once (internal administration) تم الإبلاغ عنه على الأقل مرة واحدة (للإدارة الدولية)	Reported at least once (police) تم الإبلاغ عنه على الأقل مرة واحدة (للشرطة)
Death threats تهديدات بالموت	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault إيهاانات جنسية	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent assault إيهاانات عنيفة	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other persecution اشكال اخرى من الاضطهاد	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks about „Other persecution“: ملاحظات حول أنواع أشكال آخر من الاضطهاد:

11.1. Date of incident or time-period of incidents occurring:

تاريخ الحدث أو المدة التي جرى فيها الاضطهاد.

11.2. Refugee housing in which the incidents took place

(name of housing/city/federal state):

عنوان الملجأ أو المقرّ الذي تمت فيه هذه الاحداث (اسم المقرّ/ المدينة/ دولة فديرالية)

---

12. Which types of religiously motivated violence did you experience at the hands of **other (not yet mentioned) parties** in Germany? (please mark)

ما هي أشكال العنف التي تعرضت لها بسبب انتمائك الديني على يد أشخاص أطراف لم يتم ذكرهم في المانية. (رجاءً ضع علامة)

Who was persecuting? من هو المضطهد؟ \_\_\_\_\_

	never ابدأ	Once مرة واحدة	several times مرات عدة	In current residence? (if not, note below 12.2.) في مقرّك الحالي (لذكر عنوان آخر دونه ضمن فقرة 12.2	Reported at least once (internal administration) تم الإبلاغ عنه على الأقل مرة واحدة (للإدارة الدولية)	Reported at least once (police) تم الإبلاغ عنه على الأقل مرة واحدة (للشرطة)
Death threats تهديدات بالموت	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault إهانات جنسية	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent assault إهانات عنيفة	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other persecution اشكال اخرى من الاضطهاد	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks about "other persecution": ملاحظات حول أنواع أشكال آخر من الاضطهاد:

12.1. Date of incident or time-period of incidents occurring:

تاريخ الحدث أو المدة التي جرى فيها الاضطهاد.

12.2. Refugee housing in which the incidents took place

(name of housing/city/federal state):

عنوان الملجأ أو المقرّ الذي تمت فيه هذه الاحداث (اسم المقرّ/ المدينة/ دولة فديرالية)

---

13. If incident were reported, did the refugee housing's internal administration or police act on it and take measures to protect you against further assaults?  
 في حال تم الإبلاغ عن هذه الأحداث هل تحركت كل من الإدارات الدولية لإقامت اللاجئين أو الشرطة وهل اتخذت الإجراءات المناسبة لحمايةك من إعتداءات مستقبلية؟

	Never أبداً	Sometimes من وقت الى آخر	each time كل مرة
Internal administration الإدارة الدولية	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police الشرطة	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Official police report number concerning the incident/incidents (if known):  
 رقم البلاغ الرسمي الصادر من الشرطة المتعلق بالحدث (في حال معرفته)

14. Reasons why incident/incidents were not reported:  
 الاسباب التي حالة دون الإبلاغ عن الإعتداءات أو عن الأحداث.

- بسبب القلة من أن يسجد البصية بالزور لا تفاعهم علي ويزنوع  
 نحو بلدي عن طرف للعصرية المشية اى سبب لربا.

15. What ways do you suggest could help protect you better as a Christian against religiously motivated assaults in refugee housing?

برأيك ما هي الطرق التي يمكن أن تساعد لحماية أفضل كشخص مسيحي يتعرض الى الاعتداءات بسبب إيمانه الديني في مقرات اللاجئين

\* تحبهم ماكن للأقليات المسيحية والرومية التي  
 تعرضت للإضطهاد في بلادي ثم لاعتته هنا وكثيرة  
 كادر ملائمة للتعامل مع هذه المواضيع

16. Other remarks (optional): ملاحظات أخرى:

- لقد هربت من بلادي خوفاً من الاضطهاد الديني لأجدهم يتقبلني هنا في ألمانيا دولة القانون والتعددية،  
- آمل أن أجد في ألمانيا الدولة والحكومة الألمانية التي كنت أسمع عندي في نشرات الأخبار التي لا سلطة فيها فوق سلطة القانون

Thank you for your help and may God bless you!

شكراً من أجل مساعدتك ونسأل الرب أن يبارك!

Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee  
التوقيع العلاقة صاحب

# Appendix 1: Translation of completed questionnaire into English

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Page 2 of 7

## Contact Information

Needs to be filled out by the contact person of the refugee in germany

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Questions for refugees

Personal data collected with this questionnaire will be used purely for internal purposes and will not be published or transferred to third parties!

1. Contact to person responsible since (year): 2016

2. Name (The name will not be published! If needed please note down an alias):

George (pseudonym)

3. Age (date of birth if known): 27

4. Gender:

- a. male
- b. female

5. Place of birth (Country/City): SYR

6. Did you convert to Christianity from another faith?

- a. yes
- b. no

7. Where did you find faith?

- a. in Germany
- b. in your home country
- c. in another country

8. Where do you live currently? (name of shelter/city/federal state)

Address

Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee



9. Is it your first German refugee housing?

- a. yes  
b. no

10. Which types of religiously motivated violence have you experienced at the hands of **fellow refugees** in Germany? (please mark)

	never	once	several times	In current residence? (if not, note below 10.2.)	Reported at least once (internal administration)	Reported at least once (police)
Death threats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other persecution	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks about „other persecution“:

**Calling me always the Infidel and humiliating all the symbols of Christianity with bad expressions and trying to convert me to be a muslim. Once they asked me to pay tribute to let me live in the room with them and when i said "i will report this", they said "we are joking", but it was clear that they are talking serious.**

10.1. Date of incident or time-period of incidents occurring:

**2016**

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10.2. Refugee housing in which the incidents took place (name of housing/city/federal state):

**Address**

---

Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee

11. Which types of religiously motivated violence did you experience by **guards** in Germany? (please mark)

	never	once	several times	In current residence? (if not, note below 11.2.)	Reported at least once (internal administration)	Reported at least once (police)
Death threats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other persecution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks about „Other persecution“:

11.1. Date of incident or time-period of incidents occurring:

---

11.2. Refugee housing in which the incidents took place (name of housing/city/federal state):

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Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee

12. Which types of religiously motivated violence did you experience at the hands of **other (not yet mentioned) parties** in Germany? (please mark)

Who was persecuting? \_\_\_\_\_

	never	once	several times	In current residence? (if not, note below 12.2.)	Reported at least once (internal administration)	Reported at least once (police)
Death threats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other persecution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks about "other persecution":

12.1. Date of incident or time-period of incidents occurring:

---

12.2. Refugee housing in which the incidents took place (name of housing/city/federal state):

---

13. If incident were reported, did the refugee housing's internal administration or police act on it and take measures to protect you against further assaults?

	never	sometimes	each time
Internal administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
police	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Official police report number concerning the incident/incidents (if known):

---

Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee

14. Reasons why incident/incidents were not reported:

**Because i am worrying that they will all be witnessing together against me and they are a lot and i am alone. And they will transfer me from a Goal of Religious Racism to a Reason for Racism .**

15. What ways do you suggest could help protect you better as a Christian against religiously motivated assaults in refugee housing?

**Making Special homes for the Minority Christians who were suffering from persecution in their countries and came and found it her too, in the camps .  
Providing suitable staff who can deal and manage our problems.**

Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee

16. Other remarks (optional):

I have escaped from my country because of the religion persecution and came and found it here is Germany, The Christian Country and the Country of Law.  
I Wish I could find Germany as the Secular Country and Government, I always heard about in the news and that there is no one and nothing over the Law .

**Thank you for your help and may God bless you!**

Signature of contact person

Signature of refugee

## Appendix 2: Handling of attacks – Experiences of the ZOCD-Staff

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According to ZOCD staff, the possible procedures after an incident has been reported in an asylum shelter are as follows. If an attack is reported at all to those in charge, e.g. authorized staff or camp managers, and they decide to take action, the options are:

- >>> Separate accommodation of the conflicting parties within the facility, in the case that they have been accommodated in the same room, corridor or house before. In most cases, this is only a short-term solution because the desire for revenge will usually lead to new confrontations and more conflicts.
- >>> Separate accommodation outside of the facility, ideally in another administrative district

### >> **Relocating refugees to another camp**

- > This measure leads to the permanent separation of the conflicting parties. However, the decisive question is who will be relocated since being transferred constitutes an accusation. In most German refugee camps the majority of the staff as well as the refugees are Muslim. For this reason, they often form a Muslim alliance within the camp – some perhaps without even being aware. This solidarity among Muslim brothers and sisters in faith as well as the imbalance in numbers between Muslims and Christians often result in Christians being identified as the perpetrators (since the majority confirms this) even if this does not reflect the true state of affairs. Some volunteer helpers have described this sort of situation as Muslims unconsciously applying a Sharia-judgement to Christians. A case in point was when Somalian guards in a municipal camp told a group of Eritrean refugees to leave their chairs because they were supposedly too close to a table with Muslim women. The explanation was simply that this was ‘Sharia’ and had to be observed.

If refugees are transferred to another accommodation without justification, this only adds to the trauma they experienced before and forces them to live with an even greater feeling of injustice and oppression. It is very hard to break this cycle.

In the new accommodation, it is very hard for Christians to find a person of trust who will understand their situation. At this point it is often the ZOCD working group for refugees who find a local integration guide, ideally belonging to the same denomination as the refugee. Experience shows that any other option only results in a continuation of the refugees’ suffering, because they always seek to be protected from their own community and even during the waiting period of the application process in the camps they try to connect primarily to their own denomination and culture. If they don’t succeed in establishing this connection during the first contact phase, several follow up attempts are necessary, because

these Christians are struggling to gain any foothold. They long to feel at home in their own spiritual community which they actually need in order to find healing from their trauma.

This process is completely managed by the ZOCD working group for refugees, which also contacts the respective local authorities. The latter usually agree to the work of the ZOCD because it always proposes individual solutions for each case and also provides a written documentation for all parties involved. The decisive factor in this process is the trust and the goodwill of the staff in charge.

- > A different scenario is at hand if one of the conflicting parties has already become conspicuous due to previous crimes and there is a criminal record. In this case it is not the victim but the perpetrator who has to move to another asylum shelter. However, the perpetrator is likely to act in a similar way in the new facility. The reason for this is that many offenders are eager to spread their extremist views. If a perpetrator now experiences that the only consequence to his action is a police interrogation and his subsequent transfer to another facility – rather than being held in a torture prison as might be expected in his home country – while being provided with food and free medical care, he will take it as an incentive to continue. Apart from this, these extremists often stay in contact with friends in their previous facility and can thus still put pressure on the victims through intermediaries.

In this context, it is crucial to draw attention to another aspect. Extremist refugees who are continually transferred from one asylum shelter to another, instead of being deported, establish social networks in all of these facilities. For this reason they are able to continually expand their sphere of influence and activity. This phenomenon constitutes a serious threat to the society because extremist thinking can spread quickly.

### >> **Evacuation and accelerated procedures**

Since politicians do not support the idea of separate accommodation for Christians, affected refugees are relocated to decentralised accommodation upon consultation with the municipalities. ZOCD staff from the working group for refugees consult with the refugee and – if present – his family in Germany weighing the options of accommodation. A problem in this process is that there is no uniform procedure of protection for religious minorities affected by religiously motivated hostilities in asylum shelters. It exists neither at state, nor at federal level, nor in any municipality. Whether measures are taken therefore often depends on the goodwill of the authorised staff.

It always depends on local Christians or other volunteers whether or not Christian refugees will find protection. Many German citizens do not dare to speak about 'racism' among migrants, and even less about religious conflicts among refugees. This is due to the fear of being blamed twice, once for putting Muslims under general suspicion and secondly for giving preferential treatment to Christians on grounds of the common



faith. In addition, there are other historically rooted prejudices against the Germans relating to the Nazi past. Therefore, the experiences vary from camp to camp. ZOCD volunteers always have to pay close attention and are obliged to thoroughly investigate whether or not a conflict is motivated by religion. This requires a time-consuming examination based on their knowledge about the cultural background; otherwise a factual situation of the case can hardly be established. Only cases requiring cooperation with superior staff are actually presented to the authorities, and never without consultation with the victims. Otherwise different legal solutions are found.

Perhaps such time-consuming procedures can be carried out more easily by the ZOCD working group for refugees than by other groups. Its language skills and cultural knowledge make it easier for the working group to adequately judge religiously motivated attacks on Christians and other religious minorities, especially from the Arab world.

**This is due to the following reasons:**

- >> Oriental Christians who volunteer in refugee work have often fled to Germany themselves as refugees. Their motives have often been very similar to those of current refugees. They have detailed knowledge about the respective world views which sometimes differ significantly from the western one. Additionally, they are familiar with their countries' history of persecution of Christians by Muslims and share the same desire to survive as an independent Christian ethnicity among the other refugees while keeping peaceful relationships. Consequently, oriental Christians have a great interest in a sustainable solution for the problem of religiously motivated attacks.
- >> Due to uncontrolled immigration to Germany, volunteers and affected refugees are often confronted with the problem of lacking clarity about the refugees' identities. A lot of refugees have complained about not even knowing the identities and intentions of fellow-refugees they have to share a common, tight space with. This becomes especially problematic when continued religiously motivated attacks are carried out by the same perpetrators. When it comes to particularly violent assaults, perpetrators would often use their unclear identity as a cover-up. This poses a great challenge for finding adequate measures. If, in one of those cases, a deportation is taken into consideration, the language knowledge of oriental Christian volunteers has often helped to identify the country of origin of perpetrators and the identity of victims. The success of resolving such cases – especially involving so-called 'false Syrians' – depends to some extent on persons familiar with geographical details or church officials from Syria and Iraq. The perpetrators often can be identified by their dialects and other methods of identification involving knowledgeable persons which ideally lead to clarity about whether or not a conflict is religiously motivated. The detailed information gained through such an investigation can also be used in other areas of assessment in the work with refugees.

If the injustice against Christian refugees continues without consequences, they will only be further traumatised in their everyday life, adding to the trauma they previously suffered from war and flight. As a consequence the integration process is slowed down or limited. In the meantime many Christian refugees are suicidal due to their experiences and their desperate situation.

# About Open Doors

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## Serving persecuted Christians worldwide

Worldwide there are far more than 100 million Christians being persecuted for their faith. Open Doors has been working for over 60 years as an interdenominational Christian relief organisation helping persecuted Christians in more than 60 countries. Every year, the organisation publishes the Open Doors World Watch List naming the 50 countries where Christians are persecuted most severely and analyses the situation of Christians with regard to religious freedom. Additionally, the organisation works in cooperation with churches and local partners to support persecuted Christians through help for self-help, emergency relief, training, advocacy, distribution of Christian literature, and helps the families of murdered Christians. In countries where there is freedom of religion Open Doors highlights the plight of persecuted Christians through a wide range of media while calling for prayer and help. The work of Open Doors Germany is funded exclusively by donations. The charity is certified to comply with the financial standards of the German Evangelical Alliance.

## Dedicated help in roughly 60 countries – countering hatred and violence

To this day strengthening Christian communities in a hostile surrounding is at the heart of Open Doors' efforts. This ministry is supported by Christians and churches worldwide. Every year about 330,000 Christians are trained locally – many of them church leaders – and are supported, for instance, in deescalating violent situations. In Iraq and Syria the ongoing emergency relief projects are complemented by training seminars for the coordination of relief distribution. Due to the high level of violence exerted by mobs in Muslim countries as well as by militant groups such as Islamic State (ISIS), Boko Haram or al-Shabaab, training for trauma consultants to support the victims of persecution has increased. Open Doors also helps women and girls traumatised by rape as well as the families of murdered Christians. In the past year over 3 million Bibles and other items of Christian literature were distributed, and about 400 individuals received support through more than 1,200 social economic development projects. Currently, Open Doors is providing emergency relief for over 125,000 Christian refugees in Syria and Iraq every month. All efforts are aimed at strengthening the Church in the midst of persecution.

*"Our global ministry for persecuted Christians can only succeed if all Christians see themselves as part of one family and stand up for one another. The church of Christ is not divided in two, one on holiday and the other under persecution", says Markus Rode, CEO of Open Doors Germany.*

# Other participating organisations

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## Aktion für verfolgte Christen und Notleidende (AVC)

Action on behalf of Persecuted Christians and the Needy

[www.avc-de.org](http://www.avc-de.org)

AVC is working on four continents to: support persecuted Christians, help those in need and spread the message of the Gospel.

## Europäische Missionsgemeinschaft e.V. (EMG)

European Mission Society Fellowship

[www.missionsbefehl.org](http://www.missionsbefehl.org)

EMG serves those who have no voice, who are being oppressed or are finding themselves in difficulties. The organisation focuses mainly on migrants, the elderly and other people in need.

## Zentralrat Orientalischer Christen in Deutschland (ZOCD)

[www.zocd.de](http://www.zocd.de)

ZOCD exists to further the integration of oriental Christians in Germany and helps maintain the cultural and religious values of the oriental churches.



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Im Dienst der verfolgten **Christen** weltweit

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