

A survey by Open Doors Germany

Religiously motivated attacks on Christian refugees in Germany

Open Doors
Im Dienst der verfolgten **Christen** weltweit

Imprint

Published by
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Publication date
May 2016

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1 Introduction

With the intake of a large number of refugees within a short period of time, especially in the year 2015, Germany is facing huge challenges. Looking at the dramatic rise in numbers of refugees, especially from the war-torn regions of the Middle East (Syria, Iraq et al), but also from Iran and Afghanistan, politics and society are facing completely new tasks.

However, there is one issue that has long been overlooked by the general public: The increase of religiously motivated abuse and violent attacks on Christians in collective living quarters[1].
Concerning this issue, Open Doors received numerous requests for help in the course of the year 2015, originating from churches, politicians and even the police. Those who turn to Open Doors for help know them as a Christian organization that helps persecuted Christians and annually publishes the World Watch List[2] on the persecution of Christians.

Most inquiries were brought forward by people who are directly involved with refugees either due to their professional background or as volunteer helpers who did not feel prepared or did not dare to openly address this sensitive issue. They were alarmed by a growing number of religiously motivated hostilities and attacks by Muslim refugees as well as Muslim security personnel. The vulnerability of many Christian refugees in the face of such attacks was a matter of great concern to them.

For over 60 years Open Doors has been helping persecuted Christians, therefore the reasons behind persecution and the discrimination of Christians especially in Islamic countries is well known to the organization. The publication of the World Watch List serves to raise awareness of their situation. This index only focuses on countries with limited religious freedom, therefore it was a completely new experience for Open Doors to observe that Christians are under serious pressure for their faith in a country like Germany. This is even more shocking as Germany advocates religious freedom, and the present government has included this right in their coalition treaty[3].

The primary issue is not the fact that there are interpersonal conflicts in overcrowded reception centers in the face of an unexpectedly huge number of immigrants, many of whom are traumatized as they are coming from crisis regions. What is alarming is the fact that Christian refugees and other religious minorities are increasingly experiencing the same kind of persecution and discrimination as in their home countries and are not receiving appropriate protection in Germany.

In spite of a growing number of indications through media reports, human rights organizations, church leaders and umbrella organizations of oriental Christians, this issue has not really been tackled by political or government authorities yet. The impression can hardly be avoided that incidents are being intentionally trivialized or even hushed up. As Open Doors has learned from confidential conversations, even in police stations religiously motivated attacks have not been labeled as such when being documented.

1 This survey focusses on Christian minorities since Open Doors is especially well connected to them through its mission, purpose and networking with churches of all denominations. It is quite reasonable to assume that other religions minorities such as Yezidis, Alevites, Bahai are subject to similar pressure hence need the same kind of protection.

2 The World Watch List is an index which names the 50 countries where Christians are most persecuted and discriminated against for their faith (http://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/).

3 Cf. Shaping Germany's Future, Coalition treaty between CDU/CSU and SPD retrieved on 12 May 2016 from: http://www.kas.de/wf/en/33.36853/, p. 115

Therefore these frequently occurring incidents of religiously motivated violence have not been documented statistically and classified appropriately in view of their severity and frequency. This has led to a high number of religiously motivated human rights violations against Christians and other religious minorities being treated as irrelevant. Many organizations or operators of refugee centers seem to take no interest in investigating religiously motivated attacks against Christian refugees or members of other religious minorities in their facilities, as this is considered a delicate issue; they obviously wish to avoid having their facilities (or the institutions running them) brought into connection with such incidents in the public. In order to counter such grievances and misinterpretations and in order to help the defenseless Christian refugees in German refugee homes, Open Doors decided to conduct a systematic inquiry into the issue of religiously motivated attacks against Christian refugees in Germany. One of the goals of the survey was to determine the extent of religiously motivated attacks and whether these are merely isolated incidents as has often been stated. Another aim of the investigation was to identify the perpetrators and their motivation.

The main goal was to establish a reliable database on this issue in the shortest possible time in order to provide politicians in Germany with a basis for action, thus enabling them to protect Christian refugees and members of other religious minorities.

2 Registration of religiously motivated attacks

The registration of religiously motivated attacks is generally a difficult issue. Up to this point, these incidents are not being documented systematically in Germany. Therefore the classification of the incidents presented in this study as "religiously motivated" is based on the individual experience and estimation of the person affected. Generally there is no reliable assessment from any official side. The reasons for this are as follows

- registering one's religious affiliation is only possible if both the injured person and the perpetrator are stating them voluntarily
- Language barriers often complicate a clear assessments of the incident
- The suspect is generally not required to state his or her motivation
- Religiously motivated offenses can appear as other criminal offenses that are only indirectly linked to religious matters, for instance assaults of Muslim men against Christian women
- The responsible bodies often lack the awareness of religion as a possible key motivation and therefore tend to state ethical conflicts, food conflicts or everyday situations as the trigger of religiously motivated attacks[4].

The CDU/CSU floor leader Volker Kauder pointed out on April 11, 2016 that minister of the interior Thomas de Maizière had assured him that such criminal offenses were going to be registered under a special sub-category named "religiously motivated crime" in the larger category of politically motivated crime[5].

3 Concept of the questionnaire

In order to implement the survey, a questionnaire was developed which included 16 questions (see annex 1). The questions concerned personal data 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 course of events (death threats, sexual assaults, physical harm, other forms of persecution) as well as identity and alleged motives of the perpetrators (fellow refugees, security staff or other persons) and the date, respectively the timeframe in which the incident took place.

If the attacks were reported to the police, the reactions of the police and the facility management were inquired. If not, the affected persons were asked to give reasons. Finally the affected persons could name the desirable consequences as they saw fit and make further remarks.

The questionnaire is attached to this report as annex 1. Annex 2 is an example of an anonymized questionnaire in Farsi which was filled in by an affected refugee; the translation into English is attached as annex 3.

4 Cf. Senate and Parliament of the Free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg (23 February 2016). Parliamentary query by Prof. Dr. Jörn Kruse and Detlef Ehlebracht (AfD) on 16 February 2016 and reply by the senate. Retrieved on 03 May 2016 from: https://www.buergerschaft-hh.de/ParlDok/dokument/51655/religi%C3%B6s-motivierte-gewalt-gegen-minderheiten-in-hamburger-fl%C3%BCchtlingsheimen-ii-.pdf

5 Cf. CDU/CSU (11 April 2016). Christen in Flüchtlingsheimen besser schützen, retrieved on 03 May 2016 from: https://www.cducsu.de/themen/innen-recht-sport-und-ehrenamt/christen-fluechtlingsheimen-besser-schuetzen

4 Data acquisition

4.1 Timeframe and geographical scope of investigation

The survey began on 15 February 2016. For the purpose of this inquiry 4 April 2016 was set as the closing date. There are still questionnaires coming in after this date, which are being assessed for further information. The survey was performed Germany-wide.

4.2 Implementation

While conducting the survey, the main priorities were the protection of the respondents as well as the reliability of the information. For this reason, Open Doors used its various church networks to partner with individuals standing in direct contact with refugees.
The questionnaires were prepared by Open Doors for downloading online. In order to avoid inappropriate answers, the questionnaire was not accessible to the general public. It was only possible to gain access after authentication through a personalized code, which required the personal contact to Open Doors staff. Due to technical circumstances, the majority of questionnaires were filled out by hand. Open Doors staff then entered the information into a data system.

4.3 Particularities and challenges

4.3.1 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 building relationships with refugees. Some partners had already been engaged with refugee work for several years.

Furthermore it was necessary to the 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. However, 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 translated all questionnaires into German.

4.3.2 Time consumption

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. Open Doors received several messages like one from a pastor in Thuringia, who had already reported more than 10 cases to the police, including severe cases of assault. Nevertheless it had not been possible so far for this pastor to participate in the survey because of his other commitments to refugee work.

4.3.3 Fears of 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 the situation is not any different in the refugee homes in Germany – a country officially practicing religious freedom – and, again, they find they are not receiving any help.

The highest risk in participating in the survey was taken by the converts from Islam to Christianity, who are especially in danger due to their change of faith.

5 Special situation of converts

Of the 231 refugees who had filled in the questionnaire by 15 April 2016, 86% were converts who left Islam to become Christians. There is little awareness of their vulnerability and special need for protection. For that reason the questionnaire also asked them for details about their Christian background. 69% of the affected persons who converted to the Christian faith came from Iran, nearly 13% from Afghanistan and almost 5% from Syria. The first two of these countries are listed among the top 10 of the Open Doors World Watch List. This is an index, published annually, showing in which countries Christians are persecuted the most. On the World Watch List for 2016, Afghanistan is listed fourth and Iran ninth. The country report which accompanies the World Watch List states the following about the situation of converts in Afghanistan:

"Converts especially face pressure as they are not just deviating from the faith, but putting themselves outside the family, clan, village, tribe and ultimately, nation. Therefore Christians have to remain in deepest secrecy and many have left the country, either because they were discovered, stood in the risk of being discovered or because the pressure has become unbearable."

And further:

"Muslim background believers always have to be very cautious as even the suspicion of having converted can lead to severe consequences like arrests or the destruction of living spaces and businesses. Social control is high and it is difficult to hide the new-won faith over a long period of time, especially if the convert has children. Additionally, he or she is in a catch 22 situation as they do not want to send their children to a madrassah and it is dangerous to share about the new faith to their children as well."

And finally:

"Article 3 of the constitution, stating that no law shall contravene the tenets and provisions of the holy religion of Islam, leads to restrictions in many areas. And as the wording is rather flexible, it remains unclear what may be deemed as inappropriate and against Islam. Afghanistan is an Islamic Republic and does not allow any deviation from the Muslim faith. Accusations of conversion are equated to blaspheming Islam and the prophet and neither Christians nor other religious – including Muslim-minorities - enjoy freedom of religion."

Concerning Iran, where Christians are being repeatedly arrested, the country report reveals the following experience of Christians:

"Imprisoned Christians – especially converts - can be offered to be released on bail. Often this concerns high amounts of money – reportedly varying between 2.000 and 200.000 dollars, forcing the Christians involved or their family members to mortgage their homes. After their release these Christians can be pressured to leave the country, which they often do."

It goes on to say:

"Converts from Islam to Christianity cannot openly practice their faith. Any impression to those around them that they may be Christians can have serious consequences. If they are the only believers in their family, they have to be very careful in the way they worship."

These reports indicate very clearly that the lives of converts who have changed from Islam to the Christian faith, are at high risk. Very often they are not only labeled traitors of their faith, but also traitors of their people and even of the entire Muslim community. Therefore taking action against these "apostates" is not only legitimate but can even be understood as an obligation for all Muslims subscribing to this logic.

It is not new that, when talking of religious freedom, the right to change one's faith is a subject of heated international debate. It has been on the agenda of several general assemblies of the United Nations. In this context the Organization of Islamic Cooperation has for a number of years regularly submitted a "resolution against the defamation of religions" which could be used officially against converts (committing the ultimate insult of turning their backs on Islam). It was not until numerous NGOs exerted international pressure that many states recognized the kind of threat this resolution posed for religious freedom. This led to its rejection in the year 2011.

This excursion into international politics shows a crucial need for the protection of converts and of the right to be able to freely choose one's faith (including changing it). This is especially true when religious minorities looking for help and protection turn to a country like Germany where the rights to freely practice one's religion are constitutionally guaranteed.

6 Evaluation

The study at hand describes the experience Christian refugees have made in connection with religiously motivated persecution and German refugee shelters.

It is based on the responses given by 231 refugees who report how they have personally experienced religiously motivated persecution in Germany. No conclusions can be drawn concerning the number of the attacks per federal state. The number of returned questionnaires do indeed show regional differences but this has been primarily due tothe extent of commitment and the availability of contact persons participating in the study during the given time-frame. Additionally, this time period was limited to a few weeks in which Open Doors had to identify as many trustworthy persons as possible and mobilize them to participate in the study.

6.1 Statistical Frame

Most participants in the study were male (82%, 190 in numbers). They were relatively young (116 below 30 years of age). The detailed list presents the following picture:

Age structure in years:

- 13–19: 3% (7 people)
- 20–25: 25% (57)
- 26–30: 29% (67)
- 31–35: 18% (42)
- >35: 13% (29)
- No age stated: 13% (29)

Most of the participants came to Germany from the Islamic countries Iran (69%/ 160 people) and Afghanistan (13%/ 30 people) as well as Syria (5%/ 11 people)[6].

At the time of the survey 49% of the respondents were still residing in initial reception centers in one of the federal states Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Berlin, Brandenburg, Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia or Saxony-Anhalt. Just over half of the respondents, 124 in number, came from Berlin.

Most of them were converts (86%/ 199 people), referring to people who have changed their religious affiliation. In this context the people in question are Christians who grew up as Muslims but later decided to accept the Christian faith. Out of this group of converts 29% became Christians in Germany and over 60% already had become Christians in their home countries . By coming to Germany they had hoped to receive protection from persecution and be given the freedom to practice their religion as enshrined in the constitution. However, they experienced the continuation of the pressure they had come to know from their home countries.

> *I have fled from my own country to Germany hoping that my life would be safe from the impending dangers here, but I have been threatened even more in Germany.*
>
> *Male refugee from Iran*

6 Other countries of origin: Bosnia, Albania or not specified

7 Others: Conversion in a third country or not specified

6.2 Experiences in Germany

After many had fled their own countries because of religious persecution - some arriving in Germany heavily traumatized - they now find themselves suffering renewed persecution as Christians in German refugee centers without being protected.

> *At this point I need to say that I really didn't know that after coming to Germany I would be harassed because of my faith in the very same way as back in Iran.*
>
> *Male refugee from Iran*

> *They drew crosses and then crossed them out with an "X" thus insulting us. They threw their garbage in front of our door. They very loudly played the 'Azan' (Muslim call to prayer) and recordings of the Quran. We had to leave the last accommodation where we stayed because of death threats.*
>
> *Female refugee from Iran*

Most of the Christian refugees in the survey (88% / 204 persons) had experienced religiously motivated persecution at the hands of fellow refugees, almost half of them experiencing persecution at the hands of security staff (49% / 114 persons - some additionally). Out of the participants residing in refugee centers in Berlin, even two out of three experienced persecution at the hands of security personnel (69% / 85 persons). In these places 92% or 114 out of 124 persons had also endured persecution at the hands of fellow refugees.

> *At the accommodation where we were placed the security did not impose order. Every morning we were woken up at 5 o'clock by the loud Azan (Muslim call to prayer). The situation got worse as soon as you complained because they say this is the right of Muslims. Additionally they could insult us with impunity. At this accommodation two of my friends already received death threats. Their cross necklaces were ripped off their necks. Now none of them there are wearing a cross any longer.*
>
> *Male refugee from Iran*

It needs to be stated that such experiences of persecution are not isolated events. Three quarters of all respondents (170 persons) had to endure such abuses repeatedly.

Insults are mentioned most often (42% / 96 persons), closely followed by personal injuries (37% / 86 persons) as well as death threats either against the Christian refugees themselves and/or against their families, be it in Germany or in their countries of origin (32% / 73 persons).

> *When receiving our pay we are always pushed to the back. The same is true in the kitchen where it's always our turn last. After midnight, when we sleep, they knock on our windows and out of fear we cannot continue sleeping. The next day during language lessons we are not able to learn well. Muslims are calling us 'mortad' (infidel) and are stealing from the kitchen. They have stolen our belongings from the fridge so many times that meanwhile every room has been given a separate fridge.*
>
> *Male refugee from Iran*

Time and again Christian refugees are victims of theft (14%/32 persons), being discriminated against regarding supplies (7%/60%) or specifically woken up at night time (5%/11 persons). Additionally harassments through loud religious music and/or prayers were mentioned (27%/62 persons) as well as threats (7%/16 persons). Physical attacks such as beatings, spitting or shoving, which do not always amount to physical injuries were experienced by 3% or 7 persons.

> *I was repeatedly insulted in disputes with Muslims and physically attacked so that the police had to intervene every time. The memories of these incidents are still burdening me to such an extent that I developed serious psychological issues and tried to commit suicide. - In my accommodation I had confrontations with the security. They insulted our religion and attacked us. I have told the police about this as a witness. After receiving death threats from the security personnel, we went to the police together with the pastor of the church and filed a complaint to them.*
>
> *Male refugee from Iran*

As mentioned above, there is most likely a very high number of unreported cases in the area of sexual assaults. Open Doors learned of four cases which were mentioned by respondents. Christians are not only labeled as 'harzegi' (prostitutes), Christian women are also being molested by some members of the Muslim security staff. As one respondent reported: "Some of the Muslim security personnel kick at the bathroom door when a woman is in there and enter under the pretext that she is taking a very long time in there." (Male refugee from Iran).

The reports below indicate that, in spite of all appeals already directed at the authorities and politicians, the problem continues to exist. Open Doors received this information on 4 May 2016 and is not aware of any resulting consequences for the perpetrators.

A Christian couple from Iran was harassed in an increasingly severe manner by the Afghan manager of an asylum seeker home in Berlin: As "infidels" they were not given beds but had to sleep on the floor over a period of several months. Recently the manager went so far as to personally demolish their sleeping quarters and destroy their Christian items (Easter candle, Bible, church letter).

Another refugee was being threatened massively by other Muslims living in the same accommodation because of his conversion and was subjected to Koranic chanting around the clock. This continued up to the point where last night he tried to take his own life with a razor blade. Fortunately he was found in time.

Two weeks ago we had to relocate another group of eight refugees and temporarily accommodate them on our premises. They had been receiving serious death threats because they had refused to participate in the ritual Muslim prayers in the gym. Security personnel were called in for help and accompanied the perpetrators to the common prayer venue... As the Christians fled the hall to the sound of loud shouts of "Allahu-akbar", the Muslim security staff gave them an off-limits order - claiming they had been attacked by the Christians.

Information provided by Pastor Dr. Gottfried Martens, Berlin-Steglitz

6.3 Reactions

Only in the rarest cases did the persons affected by attacks file a complaint with the police (20%/46 persons). Including all reports and complaints registered by the accommodation management every third respondent (76 persons) has actively sought protection by German authorities. The hope for protection was shared by all affected persons.

Among the reasons given for not registering an attack (true for 74 persons), fear was mentioned most often (45%) - especially fear of repeated attacks or even a worsening of the situation (18%). Further reasons given were: the lack of reliable communication with the police and authorities due to language barriers (18%) and the impression that filing a complaint would be of no avail (9%).

The fear many Christian refugees are experiencing is clearly expressed in many of the comments. They see themselves as a small minority within a large majority of Muslims and quickly take note that most accommodation authorities not only fail to provide any help to them, they even show a complete lack of understanding of their situation. Adding to this, potential witnesses refuse to testify in favor of Christian refugees. Time and again staff members - mostly Muslim - of the security agencies have served as witnesses against Christians. The persons affected complained that most of these staff members show no interest in protecting members of religious minorities at all.

Even if Christians press charges after an attack, the perpetrators often react by filing a counter-complaint. In these cases the proceedings are usually closed due to lack of evidence and to the impossibility of proving the charges. The effect of this is that Christians are often labeled as troublemakers and thus they fear negative implications regarding the ongoing asylum seeking procedures.

6.4 Proposals from those affected

The participants of the survey, who were or still are subject to harassment, were asked for their recommendations of ways to improve the overall security situation. Two thirds of all respondents (142 persons) made recommendations. By far the highest number of suggestions was made in favor of accommodating Christians and Muslims separately (80%/ 113 persons).

Additionally 7% of the participants (10 persons) desired special seminars for refugees. According to them, these should focus on citizens' rights and obligations according to German law with special regard to the constitutionally guaranteed right to religious freedom. Further 6% (8 persons) suggested that no Muslim security staff should be assigned to the protection of refugee accommodation at all. 5% (7 persons) proposed that those in charge of the refugee accommodation and the police receive training to become more aware of the needs of the Christian minority.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

In March 2016, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation published a report entitled "Christians under pressure?" It addressed several international hotspots but also the situation of the Christian minority in Germany. This is certainly commendable. But even though it acknowledged the increasing number of indications pointing to Christian refugees being insulted, discriminated against and harassed at reception centers and asylum seeker homes, the report also pointed out that there is no reliable data available concerning attacks against Christians:

"What is true on a global scale is also true in Germany: reliable data concerning attacks on Christians is hard to obtain, as most reports are biased and cannot be seriously verified by empiric data."

The report goes on to say:

"Most likely hostilities occurring in the asylum and reception centers for refugees are resulting from a number of different reasons ..."

The usual theories are then presented; that refugees are most likely ending up in conflicts due to general stress, crowded living conditions, future concerns or language barriers[8].
Such theories only serve to trivialize and suppress the true reasons behind the attacks as the results of the Open Doors study indicate very clearly. It shows that the documented incidents are religiously motivated attacks by nature and that they are occurring frequently, not just occasionally. The incidents listed in the report most likely represent just the tip of the iceberg. What makes this even more likely is the fact that many Christians had to learn to keep their Christian faith secret in their own countries. Now they are repeating the same behavior in Germany - out of fear and the need for self-protection they refuse to talk openly about any injustice suffered. For decades, Open Doors has gained experience in locating such Christians in order to help them.

The problem of attacks against members of religious minorities in Western refugee centers is by no means a purely German problem. There are other European countries where alarming signals are starting to reach the public as has recently been the case in Sweden. The migration board director in Sweden has acknowledged problems in this area[9].

The trust of many Christian refugees in the rule of law being applied in Germany has been massively shaken by the attacks endured and by the failure of the authorities to provide help. Some do not even dare to confess their Christian faith any longer. This is where the limitations of religious freedom are most evident in view of Christian refugees.

The courage of all those who were willing to participate in the survey, in spite of the risks involved, should be appreciated all the more highly. In view of the high number of unreported cases (as confirmed by other NGOs, human rights organizations and umbrella organizations serving oriental Christians[10]), the urgent need to take action is more than obvious. It needs to be ensured that Christian refugees are not deprived of their nationally and internationally guaranteed right to religious freedom, and that the truth concerning the perpetrators and their motives is not suppressed. It must be clearly stated that the German state is willing and able to ensure the legally guaranteed right to freely practice one's religion. The radical form of Islam, as practiced in the perpetrators' countries of

8 Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Issue 202: 17 March 2016), Analysen & Argumente: Christen unter Druck? Das Menschenrecht auf Religionsfreiheit ist nicht verhandelbar. Retrieved on 03 May 2016 from: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_44564-544-1-30.pdf?160317113415, p.9.

9 Christian Daily (01 May 2016). Persecution in Sweden: Christian migrants harassed and threatened in asylum centers. Retrieved on 12 May 2016 from: http://www.christiandaily.com/article/persecution-in-sweden-christian-migrants-and-minorities-harassed-and-threatened-inasylum-centers/51766.htm

10 Cf. AVC, IGFM, Kirche in Not, Open Doors, ZOCD (09 May 2016). Gewalt gegen christliche Flüchtlinge in Deutschland: Hilfs- und Menschenrechtsorganisationen fordern Politik zu dringendem Handeln auf. Retrieved on 12 May 2016 from: https://www.opendoors.de/pressemeldungen.

origin, must be prevented from destroying the right to religious freedom in Germany.

Therefore German politicians and authorities are challenged with the task to take action in order to protect religious minorities who suffer from this very problem. The protection of religious and other minorities has to be ensured according to Article 18, paragraphs 4 and 21 of the "Directive of the European Parliament and Council laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection" (2013/33/EU of 26 June 2013; published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 180 p.96 dating 29.06.2013)[11]. This articles states:

"Member States shall take appropriate measures to prevent assault and gender-based violence, including sexual assault and harassment, within the premises and accommodation centers referred to in paragraph 1 (a) and (b)." Article 18 (4.)

"Member States shall take into account the specific situation of vulnerable persons such as minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation, in the national law implementing this Directive." Article 21

11 European Union (29 June 2013), Official Journal of the European Union: Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast), retrieved on 12 May 2016 from: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1463048570541&uri=CELEX:32013L0033.

There must be no more "integration experiments" at the expense of Christian refugees and other religious minorities in German asylum and reception centers. Therefore Open Doors is asking the Chancellor (and other senior politicians at federal and state level) as well as the Integration Commissioner and other regional and trans-regional authorities to swiftly implement the following measures:

1. Registration of religious affiliation upon initial reception and forwarding of the data when applicants are transferred to other places of accommodation.

2. Adoption of a system of merging groups from religious minorities so that the proportion of Christians and other religious minorities 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 decentralized accommodation. Authorities must refrain from categorically blocking decentralized 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 sensitizing coworkers and security staff assigned to refugee homes to reasons behind religious conflicts and the protection of religious minorities.

6. Assignment of Christian contacts whom Christians can turn to when affected by persecution.

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 centers in Germany would also benefit from such decisive engagement and subsequently be granted the urgently needed protection.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – questionnaire 19

Appendix 2 – Completed questionnaire in Farsi 24

Appendix 3 – Translation of the completed questionnaire into English 29

Appendix 1 – questionnaire

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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: _____

4. Gender:
   a. male
   b. female

5. Country of origin:

_____

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)

_____

9. Is it your first German refugee housing?
   a. yes
   b. no

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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	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Violent assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other persecution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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):

_____

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	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Violent assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other persecution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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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):

_____

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	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Violent assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other persecution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Remarks about “other persecution“:

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

_____

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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	From time to time	often	mostly	each time
Internal administration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
police	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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

_____

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?

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16. Other remarks (optional):

Thank you for your help and may God bless you!

Appendix 2 – Completed questionnaire in Farsi

اطلاعات تماس

نام : [redacted]

نام خانوادگی: [redacted]

[redacted]

شهر : [redacted]

شماره تلفن تماس: [redacted]

سوالاتی از پناهجویان

اطلاعات شما در این پرسشنامه صرفا جهت اطلاعات داخلی استفاده میشود و به هیچ عنوان به دست شخص ثالثی داده نخواهد شد.

1. چه مدت شخصی را که این مدارک را به شما میدهد و به شما کمک میکند را میشناسید(سال)_____

2. نام: (نام منشرنخواهد شد!اگر نیاز است در زیر بنویسید)

[redacted]

3. سن: 29

4. جنسیت:
   - √a. مزد
   - b. زن

5. کشور محل تولد: IRan [redacted]

6. آیا شما از ایمان دیگری به مسیحیت گرویده اید؟
   - √a. بله
   - b. خیر

7. در کجا ایماندار شده اید؟
   - a. در آلمان
   - √b. در کشور خودتان
   - c. در کشوری دیگر

8. در حال حاضر کجا زندگی میکنید؟ (اسم پناهگاه/شهر/ایالت)

[redacted]

9. آیا اینجا اولین محل اقامت پناهجویی شما در آلمان است؟
   - a. بله
   - √b. خیر

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10. چه نوع خشونت با انگیزه های مذهبی توسط پناهنده های دیگر را در آلمان تجربه کرده اید؟ (لطفا انتخاب کنید)

	هرگز	یکبار	چندین بار	در محل اقامت اگر نه،) کنونی؟ در قسمت 10.2 بنویسید)	حداقل یکبار به) گزارش شده (مدیریت	حداقل یکبار به) گزارش شده (پلیس
تهدید به مرگ	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑
تجاوز جنسی	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
حمله خشونت آمیز	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
اذیت و آزار دیگر	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑

در مورد اذیت و آزارهای دیگر بنویسید:

[redacted]
درسالست قرآن خواندن فارسی خواندن اذان گفتن در پارک‌ها و بزرگ و به زور دعوت کردن به مجلس قرآن و فارسی و اذیت آزار روحی و در آخر من اخراج اذیت شدم از این کشور آلمان شوم

10.1. تاریخ وقوع و یا محدوده زمانی که اتفاق رخ داده:

05.10.2015

10.2. کمپ پناهدنگی که این اتفاق در آنجا رخ داده:
(ایالت/شهر/نام کمپ):

[redacted]

11. چه نوع خشونت با انگیزه های مذهبی توسط نگهبانان را در آلمان تجربه کرده اید؟ (لطفا انتخاب کنید)

	هرگز	یکبار	چندین بار	در محل اقات اگز نه) کنونی ؟ در 11.2 بنویسید)	حداقل یکبار به)گزارش شده (مدیریت	حداقل یکبار به) گزارش شده (پلیس
تهدید به مرگ	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
تجاوز جنسی	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
حمله خشونت آمیز	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
اذیت و آزار دیگر	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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در مورد اذیت و آزارهای دیگر بنویسید:

الان من واقعن ترس عجیبی دارم دراین هایم جدید چون ازهرزن
که آماده هستم اینجا سیاه پوستان عرب و پاکستانی خیلی اذیت میکنن
چون طلیب در کردن من دیدن من رو اذیت میکنن اذیت ازنظر هروحت میرم سراغ
دوچرخه میبینم آن را روی زمین انداخته

11.1. تاریخ وقوع و یا محدوده زمانی که اتفاق رخ داده:

11.2. کمپ پناهندگی که این اتفاق در آنجا رخ داده:
(ایالت/شهر/نام کمپ):

12. چه نوع از اذیت یا انگیزه های مذهبی توسط شخصی دیگر (که نام نبرده شده) را در آلمان تحربه کرده اید؟
(لطفا مشخص کنید)

شخص آزار دهنده چه کسی بود؟ ازمریض سوریه سیاه پوست

	هرگز	یکبار	چندین بار	در محل اقامت اگر نه) کنونی؟ در 12.2 بنویسید)	حداقل یکبار به) گزارش ده (مدیریت	حداقل یکبار به) گزارش ده (پلیس
تهدید به مرگ	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
تجاوز جنسی	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
حمله خشونت آمیز	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
اذیت و آزار دیگر	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

درباره اذیت و آزار دیگر بنویسید:

همیشه به جوری رفتار میکنن که باهن دعوا کنن من و ولی چیزی نمی گویم آنها
میدونن من مجبور هستم هروحت منو میبینن تف میکنن جلوی
پای من واقعن خیلی سخته این که من ادمی به آدم میکنن

12.1. تاریخ وقوع و یا محدوده زمانی که اتفاق رخ داده:

بعد از ماروز از آن روزی که به این کمپ آماده هستم 3 ماه

12.2. کمپ پناهدنگی که این اتفاق در آنجا رخ داده:
(ایالت/شهر/نام کمپ):

---

13. اگر آزار و اذیت گزارش دهده شده، آیا مدیریت کمپ پناهندگی یا پلیس واکنشی نشان دادند و سعی کردند از شما در مقابل تکرار حادثه و اذیت و آزار بیشتر محافظت کنند؟

	هرگز	بعضی وقتها	غالب اوقات	خیلی زیاد	هر دفعه
مدیریت داخلی	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐
پلیس	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

شماره پرونده گزارش پلیس در مورد حادثه/حوادث (اگر میدانید):

---

14. به چه دلایلی حادثه/حوادث گزارش نشد:

15. چه راه هایی را توصیه میکنید که به شما از اذیت و آزار مذهبی در کمپ پناهندگی کمک و محافظت کند؟

من در واقع میخام بگویم امنیت خود واقعن ~~ضروریه~~ مسیحیان
بیشتر بسته به واقعن بودنیم اگر اقتاص برای ما بیفت کن مست سازمان
مبت کرنه ما کمک کند فقط در امنیت در کمپ میخایم کمک کنید واقعن
خیلی در ایم اذیت میشیم در کمپ

16. توضیحات دیگر (اختیاری)

از کمک شما سپاسگزاریم و خداوند به شما برکت بدهد

Appendix 3 – Translation of the completed questionnaire into English

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):

Darian (pseudonym)

3. Age: ***29***

4. Gender:
   - ***a. male***
   - b. female

5. Country of origin:

Iran

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)

Berlin

9. Is it your first German refugee housing?
   - a. yes
   - ***b. no***

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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	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒
Sexual assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Violent assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other persecution	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒

Remarks about „other persecution“:

When I was placed in accommodation at <name of place> I was harassed day and night. Arabic Syrians and Arabic black Africans played the Azan and Koranic recitations very loudly and forced me to participate in the common prayers. The psychological pressure became so strong that I had to be transferred to a hospital.

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

5 October 2015

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

<address details provided>

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	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Violent assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other persecution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Remarks about „Other persecution“:

In my accommodation I really suffered from incredible fear. There were many black Africans and Pakistanis who had already noticed my cross necklace and started to harass me. They often take my bicycle and throw it away.

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):

_____

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

Who was persecuting? ***Arabic Syrians and Arabic black Africans***

	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	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Violent assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other persecution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Remarks about “other persecution“:

They constantly try to provoke me to fight but I refuse. They know that I am a Christian. Every time they see me they spit in front of my feet. It is really not easy to endure so much rudeness.

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

10 days after my arrival at the accommodation.

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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	From time to time	often	mostly	each time
Internal administration	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
police	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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

_____

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?

Actually I would only like to say that the security for the Christians should be improved. We just want to be sure that there are people and organizations that come to our help should anything happen. We are really suffering from these circumstances.

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16. Other remarks (optional):

Thank you for your help and may God bless you!

About Open Doors

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 organization helping persecuted Christians in over 60 countries. Every year, the organization publishes the Open Doors World Watch List naming the 50 countries where Christians are persecuted the most and analyzes the situation of Christians with regard to their level of religious freedom. Additionally, the organization works in cooperation with churches and local partners to support persecuted Christians through self-help projects, emergency relief, training, advocacy, distribution of Christian literature as well as helping the families of murdered Christians. In countries with religious freedom 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 de-escalating violence-charged 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 (IS), Boko Haram or al-Shabaab, there has been increased training for trauma consultants to support the victims of persecution. Open Doors also helps women and girls traumatized 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 persons received support through more than 1200 social economic development projects. Currently, Open Doors is providing emergency relief for over 125,000 Christian refugees and 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 Christians see themselves all as one family and stand up for one another. There are no two churches of Christ, one on holiday and the other under persecution", says Markus Rode, Director of Open Doors Germany.

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Open*Doors*
Im Dienst der verfolgten **Christen** weltweit