

# What to do after a right-wing, racist or anti-Semitic attack?

Possibilities for action and help for  
victims, relatives and witnesses

**VBRG**

VERBAND DER BERATUNGSSTELLEN FÜR  
BETROFFENE RECHTER, RASSISTISCHER  
UND ANTISEMITISCHER GEWALT E.V.

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# Introductory remarks

## Who is this guide intended for?

This guide is aimed at people who have experienced right-wing, racist, antigay or anti-Semitic violence, their relatives and friends and witnesses of an attack.

Anyone who has become a victim of such an act of violence sees themselves torn out of everyday life. Often they feel hurt and frightened. When dealing with the police, many questions arise and many decisions must be taken: Should I report a crime? What happens after I report a crime? Do I need a lawyer? What is the difference between a criminal case and a civil suit?

Many of those affected are not very familiar with the legal and judicial system or have no experience at all with it. This guide is intended to help those affected to find their way in a non-routine situation. The individual chapters show what to look out for immediately after an attack. In addition, the guide provides an overview of the course of an investigation procedure and a criminal trial. Questions about compensation payments are addressed and the possible psychological consequences of an attack are also explained.

The guidebook is intended to give those affected, relatives and witnesses a brief guide to important questions and decisions. However, it cannot be a substitute for talking about the issues in person and receiving in-depth counselling.

No one should remain alone after an attack. Please contact the independent counselling centres for victims of right-wing, racist and anti-Semitic violence if you have been attacked or someone you know has been attacked.

# What can victim counselling centres do for victims?

The victim counselling centres will support you if you are affected by right-wing, racist, antiziganist or anti-Semitic violence. The staff in the counselling centres can help you with any legal questions you may have. They provide information and advice to victims, relatives, friends and witnesses:

- Decisions after the attack, such as whether to report the crime, researching the threat involved, and moving if necessary,
- Legal issues,
- Specific legal issues for people who do not have German citizenship,
- Claims for compensation and financial benefits,
- Possibilities of social intervention,
- Dealing with the media and case-related public relations work.

**The independent victim counselling centres will also help you with:**

- Finding a lawyer,
- Obtaining medical or therapeutic assistance,
- Contacts to further advisory services and facilities,
- Working through what you have experienced,
- Organising and implementing public relations work
- Can accompany you to court hearings and appointments with various official bodies.

**The people seeking advice are free to decide how much support they would like and which steps they wish to take.**

### The work of the counselling centres is:

- free of charge, confidential and, if so requested, anonymous,
- client-oriented with a focus on the interests of those affected,
- independent of state institutions,
- with interpreters, if requested,
- mobile and on-site, i.e. conversations can take place in the surroundings of the affected person,
- irrespective of whether a crime is reported,
- irrespective of residence status.

### The counselling centres also document the extent of right-wing violence, in particular:

- right-wing political attacks, racist, antiziganist, homophobic, transphobic and anti-Semitic attacks,
- Attacks on refugees, students, those who are non-rightwing politically, people with alternative lifestyles, socially disadvantaged people, the homeless or those engaged in political opposition and persons active in refugee support,
- Attacks on people with mental or physical impairments or disabilities.

The staff of the counselling centres will be happy to visit you where you live or meet you at a place of your choice.

You will find the contact details for a counselling centre near you in the annex under „Contact addresses“ on page 66.

# Points to remember after an attack

Every person reacts differently to a sudden threat and experiencing possibly massive violence that causes physical and mental injuries.

## Ask for support

Immediately after an attack, the first priority is to support the person concerned. Relatives and friends should not leave the affected person alone, but should offer support and take care of the person's physical and mental well-being. If you have become a victim yourself, you should try not to withdraw, but to ask trusted people for support.

## Document injuries

If you have been physically attacked, seek medical care, even if the injuries appear insignificant at first. Get a medical certificate listing all injuries. Visible injuries should be photographed. It is important that all injuries are carefully documented for later legal proceedings and claims for damages for pain and suffering.

## Document damages

This applies to all traces of violence. You should keep any damaged or contaminated clothing and other objects involved. The more accurately the damage is documented, the better the incident can later be presented and documented in your interest in court, health care or outreach work.



## Write a record to jog your memory

As a directly affected person as well as a witness in an attack, you should make notes of what has happened as soon as possible to jog your memory later. It is important here that you note only what you remember and that you do not discuss this with other witnesses or persons affected while you are preparing the notes.

Take your time. Write down everything you remember in connection with the attack. Describe the exact course of the crime, such as the time, the light, the perpetrator's appearance and/or who said what, e.g. if there were any insults or threats. Pay attention also to seemingly minor points that may seem unimportant to you. This will help you to remember what happened if you are to make a statement at the public prosecutor's office or in court months later. You can write these notes in a personal language or in your mother tongue, because they are only there to help you remember.

# Possible consequences of an attack

## Psychological consequences

Physical injuries caused by an attack are usually clearly visible. They are therefore noticed and treated. However even if there are no physical injuries, experiencing violence often has further consequences. Usually an attack is completely unexpected. Escaping the perpetrators does not mean that everything is over. Many people are still affected by an attack: they have suffered physical damage and sometimes psychological damage too.

## Avoidance

Some people describe it as almost unbearable to come across places, sounds or people that remind them of the attack. They suddenly „cannot stand the sight of them“ and try to avoid going into a particular street, building or train station, for example. They may therefore make a long detour. Some people cannot handle shopping and other errands or cannot manage getting to school. That means they face enormous restrictions in their everyday lives.

## Often only the tip of the iceberg

Many people affected by politically right-wing, racist, antiziganist or anti-Semitic violence have already had other experiences of discrimination and exclusion. The violent act is often „only“ the „tip of the iceberg“ of everyday experiences of exposure, rejection and threat, but also legal hurdles and unequal treatment. All this makes it difficult to work

through an attack. An attack also often triggers memories of past experiences of violence or experiences involved in one's own escape. This makes it even more difficult to continue with everyday life.

## **Thoughts going round in circles**

Even if many people have the feeling after a violent act that they no longer recognize themselves or become „crazy“, these reactions are quite normal. They are one step in processing what you have experienced and dealing better with the experience of violence.

The thoughts and memories that revolve around what has happened can cause great tension in those affected. Anxiety or fear are also possible consequences, for example in the dark or in large crowds. Affected people can quickly become irritated or angry. Some people have difficulty falling asleep in the evening or wake up in the middle of the night, suffer from panic attacks or headaches and cannot rest.

It is possible that those affected may feel hopeless, helpless or sad even a long time after an attack. Some people withdraw, stop accepting invitations, give up commitments and hobbies, feel discouraged and powerless. Sometimes, for example, those affected drink more alcohol or take medication or drugs in order to sleep or suppress thoughts of the attack.

In the event of a court hearing, the person concerned may be afraid of meeting the perpetrators again. Insecurity, anger or feelings of revenge can arise.

## **Disturbed perception of safety**

Experiencing violence really disrupts our sense of security. The perpetrators send a clear message to the victims. They want to intimidate the victims, force them to move away and

give up. In the worst-case scenario, they deny them the right to live.

As a rule, these messages are clearly understood by those affected, their immediate environment and a larger circle of people who may also be affected.

## **Talking about your feelings can help**

Even if you want to forget what you have experienced as soon as possible, it can still be important to talk about it. It helps many people to find someone to talk to about their situation. This could be for example friends or relatives. However, sometimes finding someone who does not come from your own circles makes it easier to talk openly about everything. The staff of the victim counselling centres are available for this if you would like to talk.

## **Take as long as you need**

All reactions described above represent individual ways of processing the attack and they all take time. After a devastating experience, a strong stress reaction can suddenly occur. It is important that you take your own symptoms or reactions seriously, are not ashamed and do not blame yourself. At the same time, however, you should also consciously engage in enjoyable activities that were part of your life before the attack. Usually the memories of the attack start to fade gradually after a few weeks. Everyday life moves again more into the foreground and the fears diminish.

## **Professional help often brings relief**

You should seek professional help if you still feel as if the act of violence has just happened even weeks after the attack, or if you notice significant changes in yourself. This can help prevent permanent disturbances. Everyone sees the physical consequences that an attack has left on you. Mental injuries, on the other hand, are less visible, but they must be

treated and cured in the same way. The victim counselling centres will be happy to inform you about experienced psychologists, therapists and other experts who can discuss with you about ways of dealing with and overcoming fear and other symptoms.

In the case of psychological treatment, you will need a referral from your general practitioner. The costs are usually covered by your health insurance. A session with a psychologist generally lasts 45 minutes. The first five sessions are „trial sessions“ to assess whether you feel comfortable with the therapist. If not, there is the option of changing to a different therapist. Once you have made up your mind, the psychologist may submit an application to your health insurance company to cover funding for the duration of the treatment.

**You can find more information online about on various forms of therapy at:**

→ [www.psychotherapiesuche.de](http://www.psychotherapiesuche.de)

# Do you want to tell other people about your experience?

## Start discussions

Simply filing a report on crimes committed by the perpetrators will not solve the problem of right-wing, racist, antiziganist and anti-Semitic violence alone. Many people refuse to perceive violence as a social problem at all. Public awareness raising can enlighten, generate understanding and solidarity with you and other people who have been attacked and can initiate debate.

## Forms of public awareness raising

The form of public awareness raising and the timing should be consciously chosen by all involved. There are many ways and means to reach the public: You can ask the counselling centres to disseminate information via websites and other media networks or to write a press release or a letter to the editor after consultation with you. You can organise an information event together with others or with the help of the counselling centre, or perhaps an information stand or even a demonstration. And you can post your own contributions on networks such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

If you choose to report in public and the press reports on your experiences - e.g. in (online) newspapers, on television or radio - then you can present your view on the attack and counter the widespread belief that there is no problem at all with racism, anti-Semitism or right-wing violence in your town or village..

## **What do you want to achieve?**

It is up to you to decide which form of press and public relations you feel comfortable with. Consider the following points: What is to be achieved? Who should be addressed? Do you want to talk to journalists? Who do you want to work with (a trade union, a refugee initiative, a left-wing group, a parish or other religious community, political parties or the local „Alliance Against the Right-wing“)?

## **We advise you**

You can obtain support and advice on public relations work from the staff of the victim counselling centres. This also applies to security aspects in connection with media work. If necessary, you should also seek legal advice as to when and in what form it may be useful to describe the attack to journalists and the type of difficulties this could involve.

# Why report a crime?

## Reasons why people don't report crimes

Are you unsure about whether to report a crime? Many people feel that way. There are various reasons why people affected or even witnesses do not report a crime:

1. fear of further threats and possible revenge by the perpetrators or their associates.
2. feeling suspicious or dismissive towards state authorities and the belief or experience that law enforcement authorities do not take such incidents seriously.
3. despair and indifference.
4. no interest in seeing the perpetrators punished or unwillingness to make the effort to report a crime (acting as a witness for the police and courts).
5. There are concrete reasons for not reporting a crime. Bad experiences often play a role in similar incidents. Victims of racist violence that have had experience of being treated like suspects by police officers called to the scene are more likely to avoid contact with the police.



## Reasons to report a crime

There are however many reasons for reporting right-wing acts of violence:

1. Clear limits must be set for perpetrators of violence. Treating people as „inferior“ and beating them up is entirely unacceptable.
2. As a rule, trying to avoid further violence by deciding not to report a crime doesn't work. If violent rightwingers find a victim who does not resist and does not report an attack, they may feel encouraged to commit further acts of violence.
3. Reporting a crime sends a clear message to the perpetrators and those around them. It shows them that those affected do not allow themselves to be intimidated. A conviction in court sends a clear signal and is most effective if the offence is not only condemned by the judiciary but also by society as a whole.
4. Reporting a crime does not solve the individual problems of those affected nor does it overcome the social motivations underlying right-wing, racist or anti-Semitic violence. However, reporting a crime is a first step towards moving beyond the role of victim and actively countering the experience of violence.
5. Reporting a crime is usually a precondition for receiving financial compensation. Especially if you want to claim damages.
6. An attack will only be recorded in police statistics if it is reported. It is important that acts of violence are documented. This is the only way that the general public becomes aware of such incidents and helps ensure such violence is taken seriously.

# Reporting a crime

## Reporting a crime to the police

Anyone can report a crime. Initially, this simply informs a law enforcement authority that the person reporting a crime considers that a crime has been committed. It can be reported in writing or orally to any police station or public prosecutor's office (see the specimen letter for reporting a crime in the annex, p.56). As a rule, it is advisable to go to the nearest police station. However, you can also report a crime on the Internet or have the crime reported by a lawyer you trust.

## Address to receive a summons

When you report a crime, you will usually first be asked about your personal details. This means: name, date and place of birth, home address and profession. If you are afraid that your residential address will become known to the defendant, you have the option of providing a different address where a summons can be sent. This can be, for example, the address of your lawyer, your place of work or a victim counselling centre. Although the new legal provisions state that your address can be removed from the files later, it is difficult to ensure this rule is implemented. To avoid any difficulties, we advise giving a different address right from the outset. Simply take your driving licence or passport with you when you go for questioning about what has happened. This is enough to identify yourself and no official will be tempted to note your home address in the files. All you have to do is ensure that the police and the judiciary can contact you at any time at the address where you have indicated the summons can be sent (see a specimen letter for such restriction of information in the annex, p.58).

## Duty to investigate

The police and the public prosecutor's office are obliged to initiate investigations after a crime has been reported, unless it is obvious that there is no actual indication that a criminal offence has been committed. Once a crime has been reported, the person who reported the crime is no longer responsible for the further course of the investigation. The police or the public prosecutor's office are now responsible. It is no longer possible to withdraw the decision to report the crime.

## Filing criminal charges

While reporting a crime simply informs the prosecuting authorities that a criminal offence may have been committed, filing criminal charges is a personal motion from the person concerned to the authorities, requesting that the offender should be prosecuted.



**Important:** Always file criminal charges.

As a precautionary measure, you should file criminal charges every time you report a crime. You cannot suffer any disadvantages as a result. It is advisable to do this as for some criminal offences, investigations are only carried out if the person concerned has not only reported the crime but also filed criminal charges.

## Some crimes are only investigated at your request (Antragsdelikte)

It should be noted that certain offences - such as trespassing or insulting someone - are prosecuted only if an explicit request is made by the injured person. In such cases, you should not simply report the crime but also declare in writing that the police should investigate.

In principle, there is no time limit for reporting a crime. However, you should try to report a crime as soon as possible after the crime has been committed.

## **Three-month deadline**

Charges may be filed when you report the crime. On the police report form, simply tick the appropriate box „I file criminal charges“ („Ich stelle Strafantrag“). You can also do this in writing. However, this is only possible up to three months after the incident, as stipulated in section 77b of the Penal Code.

# Tips on interacting with the police

## Right to be accompanied and right to interpretation

If you feel insecure when interacting with the police, try to take along someone you trust or a member of staff from a victim counselling centre when you go to report a crime. The officers questioning you will decide whether the person accompanying you may be present when you are questioned. If you do not feel completely confident in the German language, you have the right to interpretation free of charge when dealing with the police (for reporting a crime, for all subsequent questioning as well as in court). Insist on these rights!



**Note:** The „case number“ facilitates later inquiries to the police.

It is in any case advisable to obtain written confirmation that you have reported the crime. This confirmation must be given to you in a language that you understand. A so-called case number is noted on it. This is the entry number under which the responsible police department handles the case. If you have this case number, it will be easier for you to ask later about the report or the status of the investigation.



**Note:** The police are obliged to record that a crime has been reported!

In any case, the police are obliged to record that a crime has been reported. Nevertheless, police officers sometimes persuade injured parties not to report a crime. If you feel that you have not been treated properly by the police, if you are even sent home or do not receive

ve written confirmation that you have reported a crime, you should not simply accept this. For example, you can request a meeting with the police officer's superiors.

## **Disciplinary complaint**

If such a meeting is unsuccessful, it may be useful to lodge a disciplinary complaint if the police's conduct is clearly inappropriate (see a specimen letter for a disciplinary complaint in the annex, p.64).

# The role of the police and the public prosecutor's office in the investigation process

## **The public prosecutor's office conducts the investigation**

The police or public prosecutor's office are obliged to investigate the facts impartially as soon as they become aware that a criminal offence is suspected as a crime has been reported, criminal charges being filed or by any other means. The investigation is conducted under the direction of the public prosecutor's office. What is known as an investigation procedure is initiated.

## **A clear initial suspicion must exist**

The prerequisite for an investigation, however, is „sufficient factual evidence of a criminal offence“. On the one hand, this means that mere personal suspicions or presumptions do not justify a state investigation. On the other hand, there is no investigation if the conduct in question is not punishable by law. It is therefore possible that the public prosecutor's office, having considered a crime that has been reported, may decide not to conduct an investigation.

## **Unbiased investigation**

If, however, there are „sufficient actual indications of a criminal offence“, the public prosecutor's office is generally obliged to investigate. In doing so, it must investigate both incriminating and exonerating circumstances. That means you cannot expect the public prosecutor's office to unreservedly take your side as a lawyer you have instructed would do. Your testimony must already be carefully examined and appreciated in the preliminary proceedings. You can expect, however, to be treated fairly, that your particular situation as a victim of a criminal offence will be taken into account and that your assessment that the offence is right-wing or racist will be taken seriously.

# Witness statements to the police or public prosecutor's office

## Police summons

Normally, you will experience an investigation and criminal procedure in the role of a witness. Usually you are first questioned by the police. Until August 2017, a summons by the police was not binding. Following a change in the law, the Code of Criminal Procedure (Strafprozessordnung - StPO) now also requires witnesses to appear if they receive a police summons. So far, however, there has been little experience with the new legal situation - please consult a lawyer in your federal state or one of the counselling centres.

In any case, consider the following: As an injured party you are particularly important as a witness in criminal proceedings. Even if you yourself have not been able to observe the offence or perpetrators directly, you are usually best placed to provide information about the damage caused by the perpetrator. The police and the public prosecutor's office are therefore already particularly dependent on your assistance in the preliminary proceedings. The questioning is recorded in writing. This document must be presented to you and signed by you. Read it carefully before signing it and correct any mistakes.

## Summons from the public prosecutor's office

You must always comply with a summons from the public prosecutor's office. If you do not comply with the summons, you will be given an administrative fine and the police will bring you in for questioning. You can bring someone you trust with you whenever you are questioned. If you are of legal age, however, you will need to check that the officials who question you consent to you being accompanied during questioning – although they must also give reasons if they refuse to allow this. To be on the safe side, check with them beforehand. Of course, you can also be accompanied by a lawyer. Bring along all documents that could play a role in this context (damage reports, certificates, etc.) when you are to be questioned.



# What to do if the perpetrators report a crime?

## Get professional advice

If you are attacked, you have the right to use force to the extent necessary to ward off the attack. This cannot be interpreted to your detriment in court. Therefore, you need not be afraid to stick to the truth when questioned by the police. However, if you feel unsure whether your defence would be considered „appropriate“, you **should** first contact a victim counselling centre or a lawyer.

## Summons as defendant

If you are summoned by the police as a defendant because the perpetrators report that you have committed a crime (even if this is only to distract from their own guilt), the general rule is that you do not have to go to be questioned by the police. In this case, it is best to wait and see whether the public prosecutor's office will summon you or will drop the charges against you. However, you must appear before the public prosecutor's office if you receive a summons to this effect. At the latest at this point you should find a lawyer to represent you.

## Clarify your status in the proceedings

As a general rule, the police have a duty to make it clear to you whether you are being questioned because a crime has been committed against you or whether you are being questioned as a suspect. If you have experienced an act of violence and decide to make a statement to the police, you are obliged to make a truthful statement in your capacity as a „victim witness“. If you are accused of a crime, you have the right to refuse to testify. If your role is not clear to you when being questioned, you should point this out to the officials questioning you and have this included in the official record.

# What happens next?

## What happens during investigations and how long does this take?

The police have a remit to investigate until a conclusive overall picture emerges or until, in their opinion, further investigations would not lead to new findings. Once the police have completed the investigation, they hand over the files to the public prosecutor's office. The latter reviews the findings and may ask the police to investigate the matter further. However, if the public prosecutor's office considers the results to be sufficient, this conclusion is noted in the files. The public prosecutor's office then decides whether there is enough evidence for an indictment. Since 1st August 2015, a paragraph has been included in the Guidelines for the Investigative Work of the Police and the Public Prosecutor's Office (RiStBV) stating that the investigating authorities shall "extend the investigations to such circumstances if there are indications of racist, xenophobic or other inhuman motives". If such reasons exist, it is clear that there is a „public interest“ or a „particular public interest“ in criminal prosecution by the public prosecutor's office.



**Information:** Since the investigation procedure is often lengthy, it may be several years after the initial incident before a court hearing is held and a ruling given.

## Status inquiry and inspection of files

It may be a long time before a court hearing is held. Sometimes this can take up to two years, during which time you will not receive any notifications. If a defendant is in custody, the court is obliged to open the trial no later than six months after the crime. If you have

the impression that nothing is happening after you have reported a crime, you can ask at any time at the competent public prosecutor's office about the status of the investigation or the proceedings with a status inquiry (see a specimen letter of a status inquiry in the annex, p. 60).

It is also possible to apply to inspect the relevant files with the assistance of a lawyer. For this purpose, however, a legitimate interest must be shown, such as, for example, evaluating scope to bring a suit as a co-plaintiff (see „Preconditions for bringing a suit as a co-plaintiff“, p. 38) or to bring a civil action incidental to the criminal proceedings in what is known as an adhesion procedure (Adhäsionsverfahren).

# If the case is dropped: your options to appeal

## Notification that the case has been dropped

At the end of the investigation, the public prosecutor's office decides whether to bring the case to court or to close the case. If you clearly stated when reporting the crime that you wished to see the perpetrators punished, the public prosecutor's office must inform you with an official notification why the case has been dropped.

## Reasons for dropping a case

A case may be dropped for numerous reasons. For example, the case must be dropped if there is too little evidence („for lack of evidence“, Section 170 (2), Code of Criminal Procedure). A case is also dropped if the public prosecutor's office considers the offender's guilt to be minimal („cessation due to minimal guilt“, Section 153, Code of Criminal Procedure). This is only possible for offences where the likely sentence is less than one year's imprisonment. This applies to numerous typical politically motivated offences such as property damage, insult and bodily injury. The Public Prosecutor's Office may drop the case as being deemed to be insignificant if the attack is „not so serious“ in comparison to other offences committed by the perpetrators or if they have already been convicted of a more serious offence (Section 154, Code of Criminal Procedure). A case may also be dropped provided that a fine is paid or provided that a perpetrator-victim settlement is implemented (see p. 43).

## Scope to appeal

If you think that the public prosecutor has overlooked certain facts or has not taken these facts sufficiently into account, you can file a written complaint against a decision to drop a case (see a specimen letter in the annex, p.62). In your complaint, explain objectively what you disagree with. If you are aware of other facts or evidence, you should specify them in the notice of appeal. You can do this yourself or with the help of a lawyer.

# Testifying as a witness in court

## **The indictment contains all the findings of the investigation**

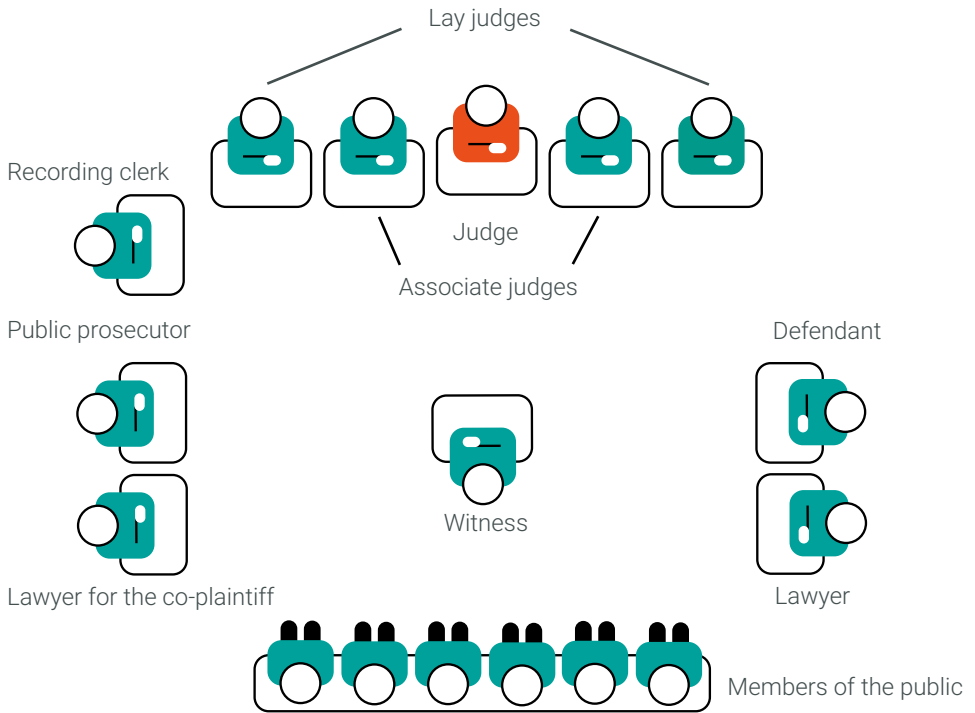
If the public prosecutor's office decides to prosecute the case, an indictment is drawn up. In it, the public prosecutor's office summarises all the results of the investigation and substantiates the paragraphs that provide a basis for charging the perpetrators. The competent court then decides on whether to admit these charges. The main trial is subsequently initiated; you will be summoned to the trial as a witness.

## **What to expect when testifying as a witness in court**

Witness hearings during court proceedings are usually more formal than police or prosecution hearings. While police questioning usually involves just you and one police officer, all parties to the proceedings are generally present when witnesses testify in a trial before a criminal court. In addition to the members of the court, these include the defendants, the public prosecutor's office and the joint plaintiffs. If you feel uncomfortable in your role as a witness, it may help to have a look at the courtroom in advance. That can help you feel more at ease. To prepare for your testimony, you should also re-read the notes you took to jog your memory.

## **Parties to proceedings**

In the courtroom, the defendants sit on one side with their lawyers. Representatives from the public prosecutor's office sit on the opposite side. If you have decided to bring a suit as a co-plaintiff, your lawyer will sit next to the representative from the public prosecutor's office. At the front are the judges. Depending on the severity of the crime, there will be one to three professional judges and lay judges. There is also another person who is responsible for the minutes. Members of the public can attend the hearing and are seated towards the back of the courtroom.



## A special case: juvenile criminal law

Juvenile criminal law applies if the defendants are between 14 and 18. As a general rule, these proceedings are not public; in contrast to adult criminal law cases, the focus is on educating the young offender rather than inflicting punishment. In cases involving adolescents, i.e. young people between the ages of 18 and 21, the general public may usually attend the hearing. However, depending on the court's assessment of the „maturity“ of the accused, in certain cases the court may opt not to follow this general rule but instead to apply juvenile criminal law and exclude the public from the proceedings.

## **Trials are generally public**

If the defendants are over 18, criminal proceedings are open to the public. You can bring people you know to the trial. This can create a more pleasant atmosphere for you and help you feel more secure. You can also ask the counselling centres to inform supportive observers about the trial and encourage them to come to the court to give you moral support.

## **Witness statement**

Until you have made your statement, you are not allowed to listen to the trial, because you should report what you remember as impartially as possible. If you are called as a witness, you will therefore be asked to wait outside the room until you are called. For your testimony, you will have to sit on a chair behind a small table in the middle of the courtroom. Try not to be put off by the defendants sitting diagonally across from you. It is best to concentrate on the judge. If you feel very insecure, your lawyer, a person you trust or a psychosocial trial support worker can also sit next to you.

## **The judge informs you of your rights and obligations**

The judge will begin the hearing by informing you of your rights and obligations. This is part of the usual procedure that the judge must follow before each testimony. During this briefing you will first be made aware of your unconditional duty to tell the truth. False statements in court are punishable by law. The judge will then ask you about your personal details, i.e. your name, age, profession, place of residence and whether you are related to the defendant.



## Questioning

After this the judge will ask you to give an account of what you remember about the incident. You should report everything you remember completely so that the court can form its own impression of your perception of what happened. If you don't remember something exactly, then you should definitely say so. You will then be asked further questions.

## Reading out of statements

It is possible that parts of your police statements will be read to you. This is to refresh your memory or to clarify details.

## Principle of oral statements

As a rule, the court can only take into account the interlinked information addressed in the main hearing. This is known as the "principle of oral statements":

It is also possible that there will be repetitions during the judicial questioning. This is normal and does not mean that you will not be listened to or believed. You may be asked about details - in which hand did the offender hold the bottle? How many seconds passed between the clanking noise and the blow? - as in legal evaluation these often play an important role, because the court has to develop its own picture of the crime.

## Who can ask questions?

In addition to the court, all parties to the proceedings have the right to ask you questions, i.e. the public prosecutor's office, the defendants' lawyers, but also your lawyer.

## **The court's duty of care**

This may be uncomfortable for you, especially if the defendant's lawyer tries to catch you out and entangle you in contradictions. Try not to be let this put you off. If you feel badly treated by the defendant's lawyer or feel insulted, inform the judge. It is also fine to request a break if you need one. The court is also there to protect you. If you have decided to bring a civil action incidental to the criminal proceedings (see below), your legal representative, who can intervene if necessary, will also be with you.

## **Testimony under oath only in exceptional cases**

If you take an oath in court, you reaffirm once more that you are telling the truth. Any false statement would in any case be punishable by law. If a false statement is made under oath, however, the penalty applied may be much more severe.

As a rule, you are not sworn in as a person affected by a criminal offence. After you have made your statement, you can either sit in the audience or next to your lawyer. You can also leave the courtroom and have your lawyer tell you how the proceedings went.

## **Reimbursement of costs**

After completing your interview, you will be dismissed as a witness and can claim your expenses (travel costs, compensation for loss of earnings).

## **Further course of the trial**

Further witnesses will be heard, possibly photos and films shown, and experts will be interviewed if necessary. The taking of evidence will then be closed. Subsequently the representatives from the public prosecutor's office pleads, as does the lawyer representing

you as a co-plaintiff (if applicable) and the lawyers for the defence. In each case the legal representatives present their view of the situation and may call for a specific penalty. The court withdraws to deliberate and often announces the verdict on the same day.

Since 1st August 2015, Section 46, paragraph 2, sentence 2 of the Criminal Code has expressly stipulated that racist, xenophobic or other inhuman motives and aims of the perpetrator are to be taken into account in sentencing decisions.

## **Options after the court ruling**

Many injured parties are disappointed by the long duration of the proceedings, the short description of their point of view and the motive for the crime as well as a seemingly mild judgement. The legal system offers scope to have the judgment reviewed at the next instance, at least if you have also brought a civil case as a co-plaintiff. You can discuss the criminal proceedings and the outcome with counsellors from the counselling centres and/or a lawyer of your choice. You can also talk with them about any subsequent steps.

## **Penalty orders allow for rapid sentencing**

In some cases, the perpetrators may not stand trial in court but are nevertheless convicted with legal effect. This so-called penalty order procedure enables a faster and less complicated procedure for offences for which the potential penalty is less than one year in prison. The public prosecutor's office decides on a penalty order instead of an indictment and this order is issued by the court. The perpetrators may lodge an appeal against the penalty order. This can then lead to the case being dropped or to court proceedings.

# What is a co-plaintiff?

## **Play an active role by bringing a suit as a co-plaintiff**

If you have suffered an act of violence, you can play an active role in criminal proceedings. The victims of certain crimes may become co-plaintiffs when criminal charges are brought by the public prosecutor's office. This gives you special rights, including the right to be permanently present at the trial and the right to question witnesses and defendants. In theory, you can act alone in this role of co-plaintiff, but it is advisable to appoint a lawyer to represent you.

## **Decision by the court**

You can file your application to join criminal proceedings as a co-plaintiff at the competent court at any time. However, a decision will not be made until a decision has been taken to initiate the trial phase of proceedings.

## **Extended right to information**

If the application is accepted, your lawyer may, after inspecting the files, submit requests for information pertaining to the investigations. This gives you more opportunities to learn about the police investigation or the motivation of the perpetrators. This also applies if the perpetrators exercise their right to refuse to testify.

## **Right for your lawyer to be present**

During the trial, the counsel for the co-plaintiff (your lawyer) represents your interests. During the trial, your lawyer sits next to the representatives from the public prosecutor's office. The lawyer representing the co-plaintiff has the right to address questions to the defendants, to file applications for evidence or to reject experts and judges. Your represen-

tative can support you when you make your statement and protect you from inadmissible or insulting questions from the defendant's lawyers.

## **Right for you to be present in court**

Usually witnesses are not allowed into the courtroom until after the defendants have been questioned. As a co-plaintiff, you have the right to follow the trial from the beginning. Often, however, people who have been directly affected by a crime decide to stay outside the courtroom until they have testified. That helps make their own statement more credible because it is made without hearing the perpetrators' statements. You should discuss this issue with your lawyer in advance.

## **Right to appeal**

Finally, your representative can plead and - if this is considered reasonable - demand a specific penalty. If the case involves an offence covered by a suit brought by a co-plaintiff (see below), the co-plaintiff can appeal against the court's ruling if the defendant is not convicted. You can also appeal against the court's decision if the court does not accept the charges brought by the public prosecutor's office.

# Preconditions for bringing a suit as a co-plaintiff

## **Offence eligible to be addressed in a suit brought by a co-plaintiff**

You can bring a suit as a co-plaintiff in particular in cases of bodily injury, homicide and crimes against sexual self-determination. In the case of insults and robberies that have not led to serious injuries, a suit as a co-plaintiff is possible if this appears necessary for special reasons, in particular because of the serious consequences of the offence in terms of protecting the co-plaintiff's rights (Section 395 (3), Code of Criminal Procedure). Bringing a suit as a co-plaintiff is not permitted for the offences of coercion and threat.

## **Bringing a suit as a co-plaintiff in the case of proceedings concerning young people**

If the perpetrators were under the age of 18 at the time of the offence, juvenile criminal law applies. In this case, a suit as a co-plaintiff is only possible if a crime with particularly serious consequences has been committed (Section 80 (3), Juvenile Courts Act). In proceedings against young people (between 18 and 21), a suit can be brought as a co-plaintiff even if juvenile criminal law is applied. In principle this is also the case in proceedings involving under-age perpetrators and young people. However, scope to bring a suit as a co-plaintiff is generally limited to procedural issues in cases against adolescents.

## **Legal representation makes sense**

In order to successfully bring a suit as a co-plaintiff, you should find a lawyer to represent you who has experience in such cases and is familiar with crimes motivated by right-wing political ideology, racism, anti-Semitism or antiziganism. As a co-plaintiff, you will not only be able to better assert your interests during the court hearing. Your lawyer can also assist you during the preliminary investigation, for example when making a witness statement to the police.

# Who pays for the lawyer?

## Costs incurred only if the defendants are acquitted

When defendants are convicted in criminal proceedings, they usually have to pay all procedural and legal costs. If the defendants are acquitted, you may have to pay your own lawyer's fees as a co-plaintiff. Costs are incurred for advice and representation in the run-up to the court hearing and in the main trial.

## No cost to you if a lawyer is assigned to you

Upon request, the court must assign a legal representative to enable you to bring a suit as a co-plaintiff in the case of offences that have caused serious injuries with a minimum sentence of one year imprisonment or in the case of an injured person under the age of 18 who has suffered serious consequences. In such cases, you do not have to pay any lawyer's fees.

## Professional competence is the key

In all other cases, when choosing a lawyer to represent you as a co-plaintiff, pick a lawyer with professional experience with this type of case who can inform you in advance of the potential costs clearly and comprehensibly. The victim counselling centres can also help you choose a lawyer.

## Legal aid

As a general rule, you can receive financial assistance in the form of legal aid in criminal proceedings,

- if, due to your personal and economic circumstances, you are unable to cover the costs, or can do so only partially or only in instalments;
- if the factual and legal situation is difficult;
- if you are unable to adequately represent your own interests or cannot be reasonably expected to do so.

## Possible recovery of funding

The question of whether or not you are eligible for legal aid will be examined in advance. You must fill out a form that you can obtain from the victim counselling services or a law firm.

Up to four years after the end of the trial, the court can review whether your financial or personal situation has improved. In this case, the court may demand that you return the legal aid money.

## Advisory services

You can contact the organisation Der Weiße Ring for a free initial legal consultation. Der Weiße Ring is a nationwide aid organisation for victims of crime. It offers counselling checks for victims of criminal and violent acts: you can select a lawyer on this basis. The law firm will bill Der Weiße Ring for the costs incurred. To obtain this assistance for an initial consultation, you must contact the local branch of Der Weiße Ring.

→ [www.weisser-ring.de](http://www.weisser-ring.de)

If you have a low income, you can also apply for what is known as a „Beratungshilfeschein“ (counselling aid certificate) at the competent court. With the counselling aid certificate, you can then go to a lawyer of your choice. The lawyer may ask you to pay a maximum of 15 euros.

## German Bar Association Fund (Fonds des Deutschen Anwaltvereins)

You should also inform your attorney that the German Bar Association (DAV) runs a foundation to which an application can be made for reimbursement of attorneys' fees („Stiftung contra Rechtsextremismus und Gewalt“). However, the lawyer representing you must send in the application. You will find the contact details on page 71.

## We support you

You can also discuss questions about bringing a suit as a co-plaintiff, the potential cost and various options to obtain support with the staff of the victim counselling centres.



# Claims for compensation for pain and suffering and for damages

## **Civil and criminal proceedings: what is the difference?**

In principle, a distinction must be made between criminal and civil proceedings. In criminal proceedings, the state, in the form of a public prosecutor, takes legal action against the perpetrators who are accused of having violated the law.

In civil proceedings, the aim is for citizens to clarify their interactions and to enforce any claims for damages or compensation for pain and suffering.

Different courts are responsible for criminal proceedings and civil proceedings. The proceedings are based on different laws with different procedural rules and rules of evidence.

## **Civil law action**

It is recommended to wait for the criminal trial before bringing a civil action, as the findings contained in the criminal court ruling on what happened when the offence was committed may help to establish a claim before a civil court.

## **Adhesion proceedings**

People affected by criminal and violent offences can assert civil claims (payment of damages or compensation for pain and suffering) in criminal proceedings if the accused were at least 18 years old at the time of the offence. The legal term is adhesion or attachment proceedings.

## **Application needed**

An application for adhesion proceedings must be made to a court, which you can theoretically do yourself. In practice, you should discuss the pros and cons of an adhesion procedure with your legal representative and - if you decide to do so - have them justify it to the court.

## Be aware of potential costs

The question of whether you should bring civil proceedings after criminal proceedings is also a question that you should discuss and decide at your leisure with your lawyer. A civil law case may be very expensive for you.

## Assert claims

Basically, civil proceedings are about you asserting your claims against the perpetrators in the form of a lawsuit.

If the court rules in your favour, the ruling from the civil court will grant you a legal title that must be enforced against the convicted parties if they do not pay voluntarily. This also means that the perpetrators must pay both the costs of the proceedings and your lawyer's fees.

However, it often proves impossible to enforce such rights, as the other party is not solvent. That means that in civil proceedings, you may find yourself not only having to pay your lawyer's fees, but also part of the costs incurred in the proceedings (e.g. costs for expert opinions).

## Limited legal aid

There are also ways to apply for legal aid for civil proceedings. The prerequisites for this are that your claim has a „prospect of success“ and that you do not have sufficient financial resources of your own to file the claim.

## Arguments for and against

Generally speaking, we recommend consulting with a lawyer experienced in civil law and weighing up the arguments for and against.

# Perpetrator-victim settlement

## Out-of-court settlement

A perpetrator-victim settlement is an out-of-court settlement. With the help of neutral mediation, it attempts to negotiate compensation between victims and perpetrators, for example in the form of compensation for pain and suffering. In the case of criminal offences such as insult, coercion, damage to property and bodily injury, the public prosecutor's office can temporarily suspend an investigation procedure and forward the case to an appropriate conciliation body.

## Agreement on compensation

In less serious cases, the investigation is dropped if the public prosecutor's office considers that a settlement has been attained. If the investigation does continue, any such settlement has a mitigating effect on potential sentencing. The preliminary proceedings will be resumed if the victim-offender settlement fails.

## Process

As a rule, the conciliation body first conducts separate discussions with the person(s) concerned and with the accused in order to clarify their expectations and goals and to prepare a meeting to discuss compensation. It is also possible for you to take someone you trust along with you. This could also be one of the staff members from a victim counselling centre. That means there is no need to worry that you will be confronted with the perpetrator alone and without support. Victim-offender mediation cannot be carried out against your will.

## Advantages

Of course, the other side must also be willing to clarify the conflict. You should consider carefully whether you want to agree to such a procedure. In principle, victim-offender me-

diation can be very positive for the victims, because a different form of conflictual engagement with the perpetrators is possible than in criminal proceedings. In addition, a decision on compensation for you can be made quickly and unbureaucratically.

## **Disadvantages**

In practice, many acts of violence motivated by right-wing political views, racism, anti-Semitism or antiziganism have proven to be rather unsuitable for victim-offender mediation. This is particularly true if the perpetrators do not show any insight into the injustice they have committed, for example, because their attitude and attitudes are supported by their right-wing environment.

## **Consider the conditions carefully**

As a victim of a politically motivated right-wing crime or violence, racist, antiziganist or anti-Semitic crime or violence, you should therefore not rush to accept the offer of a victim-offender settlement, but rather examine the specific conditions. Staff from the victim counselling centres can help you with this too.

# Compensation payments from the Federal Office of Justice

## Fund for victims of right-wing violence

There is another way you can obtain a compensation payment. Since 1st January 2007, the Federal Office of Justice has run a fund, set up by the German Bundestag, to make „hardship payments for victims of extremist attacks“ in order to ensure rapid, unburaucautic compensation for victims of right-wing, racist and anti-Semitic violence.

## Eligibility

People who have suffered damage to their health (including psychological damage) as a result of an act of violence motivated by anti-Semitism, racism, antiziganism or right-wing political violence are eligible to apply. Surviving dependants of people killed by such acts of violence are eligible too, as well as people injured while helping to defend others against such attacks.

The payment is made irrespective of nationality, age and origin. Attacks include not only bodily injury or similar, but also cases of threat or defamation. Payments for damages to property are not possible.

## Preconditions

The prerequisite for a successful application is that the offence is highly likely to have been committed for right-wing, racist, antiziganist or anti-Semitic reasons. It is not necessary for the perpetrators to have been identified. However, the attack must have been reported to the law enforcement authorities.

## Content of Application

The application must contain a precise description of the incident with details concerning the scene of the crime, the time of the crime and indications of right-wing motivation to commit the crime. The injuries suffered should also be clearly described. Payment will

only be made if the injuries are proven. That means it is important to have psychological damage such as sleep disorders, anxiety, nervousness, etc. certified by a doctor. These certificates and - if relevant - doctor's bills as well as photos of visible injuries are to be attached to the application.

## **Relinquishing entitlement to compensation**

By submitting an application, you as an injured person give the Federal Office of Justice permission to inspect the files of the police, public prosecutor's office or court in order to check the information. In addition, you assign your claim for damages for pain and suffering against the perpetrators to the Federal Office of Justice in the amount of the approved sum. In other words: If your application is successful and you receive a sum from the Federal Office as compensation, the Federal Office will attempt to sue the perpetrators to recover this money from them.

## **Civil lawsuit possible**

In principle, it is also possible for you to assert a claim for damages for pain and suffering by means of a civil lawsuit even after compensation has been granted. This method only makes sense if you have good reason to believe that you can receive a higher sum with this approach and are prepared to bear the potential costs.

## **When to submit an application**

An application may be made to the Federal Office of Justice immediately after the offence has been committed. Under certain circumstances, however, it is advisable to wait for court proceedings. This applies in particular if it can be expected that the motivation for the offence will be emphasised more forcefully in court. You should discuss the right time to file an application with the staff at a victim counselling centre. They will also help you to file an application. You will find the address of the Federal Office of Justice on page 71.

# CURA – Fund for Victims of Right-wing Violence

## **Rapid and unbureaucratic assistance**

The Amadeu Antonio Foundation CURA fund for victims of right-wing violence offers fast and unbureaucratic financial assistance. Informal written applications can be submitted to this fund, for example, for lawyer's fees, medical treatment required or to cover financial emergencies caused by the attack. However, the funds are limited. The address of the victim fund can be found on page 71.

# Crime Victims Compensation Act

## **Payment of doctor's fees**

If you have been injured as a result of an attack and will continue to require medical care in future, you can submit an application to the competent Office for Social Affairs and Health Care in accordance with the Opferentschädigungsgesetz (OEG - Crime Victims Compensation Act). This is useful, for example, if you have suffered damage to your teeth, if your spectacles have been damaged, or if you have physical limitations since the attack that are likely to persist over the next few years.

## **Payment of costs for medical treatments**

If your application is approved, the Office for Social Affairs and Health Care will cover all medical treatment costs for the coming years, for example, for new spectacles or a stay in a rehabilitation clinic. However, making an application under the OEG is not a substitute for applying for compensation for pain and suffering and does not provide any compensation for damage to property.

## Eligibility

Anyone who has suffered physical injuries or been the victim of an attack involving fire or explosives or who has been intentionally poisoned can submit an application. Anyone who has been injured in defence against an attack is also entitled to claim. In principle, both Germans and non-illegalised migrants have the right to compensation.

The full range of benefits is only available to Germans, EU nationals and migrants who have been legally resident for at least three years. The regulations for people with a different residence status are quite distinct and rather complicated. In addition, the authorities also have scope to exercise their discretion.

In all cases, we therefore recommend that you submit an application with the help of the counselling centres.

## Specific rules for refugees

In some cases, people with a refugee background are not eligible to make this kind of claim because of their residence status. However, the officials dealing with such applications have a certain amount of leeway to make decisions. That means an application should always be made. The staff of the victim counselling centres can help you with your application.



# Entitlement to medical treatment for people without German nationality

The right to medical treatment for non-German citizens is based on various laws and depends on the individual's residence status.

If you are refused treatment or payment, you should contact one of the counselling centres.

People without a legal residence permit can use first aid units or go to the emergency department in a hospital. Employees there do not have to report people without a legal residence permit to the Aliens Department. However, illegalised persons do not have access to normal medical care without having to fear deportation as there is no anonymised reimbursement of costs. For this reason, associations and non-governmental organisations that are members of the Medi-Netz offer (anonymous) medical advice and referral to (specialist) doctors. (Addresses see annex, p. 74)

# Residence rights after a right-wing, racist, antiziganist or anti-Semitic attack

So far, despite intensive protests, there is no explicit permanent right of residence for people affected by right-wing acts of violence in Germany or for their relatives. Rather, the individual cases must be submitted to a Hardship Commission in the respective federal state, if no other right of residence could be granted or won in court or via the Petitions Committee.

Since there are various reasons for exclusion and difficulties in submitting a case to a Hardship Commission, we ask you to contact one of our counselling centres or the Refugee Council (Flüchtlingsrat) in your federal state to discuss possibilities for filing an application. (Addresses see annex, p. 75)

# Right-wing, racist, antiziganist and anti-Semitic violence concerns us all

You can make a huge contribution to tackling these issues - as friends, relatives and neighbours, politicians, church congregations, teachers, people involved in local initiatives and clubs, members of sports associations, cultural or other institutions:

## Take the perspectives of those affected seriously

It is important to accept the descriptions of the persons concerned and to stand by them in presenting these viewpoints to others. Fears caused by the attack can be greatly exacerbated by a lack of empathy in the people around you. That makes it important to avoid belittling remarks or casting doubts on the descriptions of events by those affected. In particular, it makes it more difficult for those affected to process their experiences and cope with the consequences of the crime if you blame those affected („Why are you walking around like that?“ „Why didn't you avoid the station underpass?“) or express understanding for what the perpetrators did.

In particular, people close to those affected have a significant influence on whether and how the experience of violence can be processed. Interest, trust and making time for shared activities provide a form of support that can almost always only really come from friends and relatives.

## Put people in touch with support

Professional advice can be helpful for injured parties, their friends and relatives and for witnesses when it comes to questions of compensation, rights and possibilities after an attack or to processing the experience of violence. You should therefore support the victims in seeking professional advice and/or contact us yourself.

## Talk about the legal, racist, antiziganist and anti-Semitic motives for the crime

Right-wing, racist, antiziganist and anti-Semitic attacks are not normal forms of crime. It is crucial to talk about what kind of crimes these are. Right-wing violence will not decrease if we get used to it or trivialize and depoliticize it as „violence among youth“ or as „a brawl in a beer tent or at a disco“. Stating the truth about the motives underlying the crime supports those affected in processing what they have experienced, because this strengthens respect for their viewpoint. It is also important to ensure victim's perspective(s) are not excluded and to put an end to the perpetrators' sovereignty of interpretation. Including and appreciating the perspective of those affected is vital in tackling racism, anti-Semitism, anti-ziganism and extreme right-wing ideologies effectively.

## Take responsibility

Mayors, city councillors, teachers or pastors can condemn an attack publicly. Social leaders and activists can use public statements to make it clear that a municipality is not willing to accept right-wing violence.

That makes it important to describe the facts that reveal the inhuman motivation underlying the crime and make it clear that people in your community or district are being attacked for these reasons.

When identifying the motivation behind the attack (racism, anti-Semitism, antiziganism, social Darwinism, etc.), you can consider the following points:

- Do the people attacked belong to one of the target groups of right-wing violence (e.g. refugees, non-right-wing youth, People of Color, migrants, Sinti and Roma, people with impairments or disabilities, homeless people, homosexuals)?
- Have discriminatory, derogatory, racist, antiziganist or anti-Semitic remarks been shouted?

- Did the perpetrators wear clothes or other insignia typical of the right-wing scene? If the information is available, you can also mention that the offenders are members of right-wing parties or organizations, refer to relevant posts on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. or point out their participation in activities in neo-Nazi “brotherhoods”, etc.

Even though right-wing acts of violence are obvious manifestations of exclusion and contempt for humanity, they are only the tip of the iceberg. In order to actually change the situation, avoid focusing only on the attack. Instead, it is helpful to provide a comprehensive description of the local situation. As well as addressing the attack, describe other right-wing activities and societal attitudes such as racist harassment, discrimination and institutional disadvantages.

### **That is why you should:**

- Describe local right-wing activities such as graffiti, stickers, concerts, meetings and/or demonstrations of right-wing parties or organizations.
- Describe the appearance of people wearing typical right-wing clothing in the cityscape or anti-Semitic or racist statements in football, martial arts, at village festivals or at school.
- You can take a clear stand on the spot against racism, anti-Semitism, anti-ziganism and the extreme right:
- Support victims of right-wing violence publicly.
- Organize events, appeals for donations or actions against the right-wing.
- Ask people in positions of responsibility to make a statement.
- Report right-wing attacks to our counselling centres and help to counteract

the normalisation of right-wing, racist, antiziganist and anti-Semitic violence.

- Take a stand in your everyday life against racist, anti-Semitic and antiziganist expressions, slogans and activities.

There are many examples and possibilities for interventions on the ground. The counselling centres will be happy to provide you with support and develop ways to dealing with the situation together with you and/or other cooperation partners.

# Avoid „forcing people to be victims“

People who have been attacked and affected by an act of violence often do not describe themselves as „victims“ or are very reluctant to do so. Criminology and social science, among others, address the term „victim“. Both professions use „victimisation“ to describe the process of „becoming a victim“ or „making a victim“ in two steps:

Primary victimisation comprises the act of violence itself and its consequences. Secondary victimisation can occur when those affected are subsequently confronted with misconduct in their immediate environment - such as accusations of guilt, failure of the police and the judiciary to perform their tasks, denial of the motive for the crime, trivialisation, but also extreme excessive #care and paternalism. This second stage in „victimisation“ gives rise to negative psychological, social and economic consequences that do not result directly from the crime itself. Instead, they are caused by the actions and words of persons who interact with the victims after the attack (parents, teachers, police, courts, etc.). Describing the people affected as „victims“ creates the impression of great helplessness, weakness as well as a feeling of absolute impotence and a sense that only those affected are responsible for dealing with the impact of the attack. To avoid reinforcing this impression, it is advisable to avoid the term and instead refer, for example, to „the people affected“, „the people attacked“ or „injured parties“. Working through the impact of right-wing acts of violence also depends on the personal abilities of those affected, physical distance from the perpetrators, how the legal system handles the attack and personal living conditions or economic factors. However, it is primarily based on:

- the reactions of the social environment (people close to those affected, colleagues, neighbours, schools, apprenticeships etc.)
- the professional behaviour of the police, judiciary, media, physicians,
- reactions of public and institutional persons (from politics, administration, sport, culture and social work).

# Annex: Specimen letters

## Reporting a crime

Absender mit ladungsfähiger Anschrift

An die Staatsanwaltschaft / Polizei XXX

Adresse

Ort, Datum

### **Strafanzeige gegen Unbekannt / gegen XYZ**

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

hiermit erstatte ich Strafanzeige gegen Unbekannt / gegen XYZ wegen der Straftat am TT.MM.JJJJ

**BEISPIEL:** Am TT.MM.JJJJ kam ich um XX:XX Uhr mit dem Zug aus X-Stadt in Y-Stadt an. Auf dem Bahnsteig standen drei Männer und eine Frau, die ich ihrem Aussehen nach der rechten Szene zurechnen würde. Als die Gruppe mich sah, kamen zwei Männer aus der Gruppe sofort auf mich zu und beschimpften mich mit Worten wie „XXX XXX. Geh zurück in dein Land“. Ich ging etwas schneller, um von dem Bahnsteig wegzukommen. Zwei Männer rannten mir hinterher und stießen mich in den Rücken, so dass ich stürzte. Beide Männer gröhlten dabei rassistische Parolen und rannten dann weg.

Die Männer waren zwischen 25 und 40 Jahre alt und ca. 175 bis 180 cm groß. Einer der beiden, der mich gestoßen hat, hatte einen Backenbart und trug Jeans und eine schwarze Jacke. Er war stämmig gebaut und sah aus, als wenn er oft Sport macht. Der andere Mann war etwas kleiner und dünner und hatte sehr kurzes dunkelbraunes Haar. Er trug ein dunkles T-Shirt mit einem weißen Schriftzug vorne. Die Videokamera am Bahnhof müsste die beiden und die Gruppe aufgezeichnet haben. Außerdem könnte der Zugbegleiter den Vorfall beobachtet haben, da er vor mir aus dem Zug gestiegen war und sich auf den Bahnsteig gestellt hatte. Auch eine ältere Frau auf dem Bahnsteig war Augenzeugin. Sie kam zu mir und fragte, ob sie mir helfen könne. Leider habe ich vergessen, mir ihren Namen zu notieren, da ich so schnell wie möglich weg wollte.

Mein Arzt stellte am TT.MM.JJJJ fest, dass **BEISPIEL:** ich mir bei dem Sturz den rechten Daumen gebrochen habe.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Unterschrift

Anlage: Ärztliches Attest



Return address (complete address as required for a summons)

To the Public Prosecutor's Office / Police station XXX  
Address

Place, Date

***Filing of a criminal complaint against an unknown person or persons / against XYZ***

Dear Sir, dear Madame,

I hereby file a criminal complaint against an unknown person or persons / against XYZ concerning the crime committed on DD.MM.YYYY

**EXAMPLE:** On DD.MM.YYYY I arrived at XX.XX. o'clock in city Y, having travelled by train from city X. On the platform there were three men and a woman, who I would categorise from their appearance as belonging to the right-wing political scene. When this group saw me, two men from the group immediately came over and insulted me, saying things like "XXX XXX. Go back to your own country". I walked a little faster to get off the platform. Two men ran after me and pushed me in the back, so that I fell over. Both men yelled racist slogans and then ran away.

The men were between 25 and 40 and about 175 to 180 cm tall. One of the two men who pushed me had sideburns and was wearing jeans and a black jacket. He was sturdily built and looked as if he did a lot of sport. The other man was a little smaller and thinner and had very short dark brown hair. He wore a dark T-shirt with white lettering on the front. The video camera at the station must have recorded the two men and the group. In addition, the train conductor may have seen the incident, as he had alighted from the train before me and was standing on the platform. An older woman on the platform was also an eyewitness. She came up to me and asked if she could help me. Unfortunately, I forgot to make a note of her name as I wanted to get away as quickly as possible.

My doctor found on DD.MM.YYYY that **EXAMPLE** I had broken my right thumb when I fell.

Yours sincerely

Signature

Attachment: Medical certificate



**Note:** There are no legal formal requirements for reporting a crime. You should simply give a factual account of what happened and state the evidence. Follow the rule of thumb: Who? What? Where? With what? Why?

# Request to restrict personal information disclosed

Absender mit ladungsfähiger Anschrift

An die Staatsanwaltschaft / Polizei XXX

Adresse

Ort, Datum

## **Antrag auf Beschränkung der Angaben gem. § 68 Abs. 2 und 5 StPO**

### **Vorgangsnummer/Aktenzeichen**

Es wird beantragt, dass statt der Wohnanschrift die ladungsfähige Anschrift

Vorname, Name Straße Postleitzahl, Ort

zu den Akten genommen wird. Dies umfasst ausdrücklich die Änderung/Überschreibung/Schwärzung der Wohnanschrift in Schriftstücken, die bereits in der Akte sind, beispielsweise Strafanzeige, Zeugenvernehmung, Krankenhausbriefe etc.

Begründung:

Jedem Zeugen ist es gestattet, eine von seiner Wohnanschrift abweichende ladungsfähige Anschrift anzugeben, wenn ein begründeter Anlass zu der Besorgnis besteht, dass er selbst oder Personen seines Umfeldes gefährdet sind oder dass auf Zeugen oder eine andere Person in unlauterer Weise eingewirkt wird (§68 Abs. 2 StPO).

Dieses Recht besteht auch nach Abschluss der Zeugenvernehmung.

Ein begründeter Anlass zur Sorge im Sinne von § 68 Abs. 2 StPO besteht insofern, als es sich bei der Körperverletzung um eine **BEISPIEL** rechts motivierte Tat handelte. Die mutmaßlichen Täter gehörten offenbar der rechten Szene an und beschimpften den Geschädigten mit rassistischen Parolen. Es ist nicht auszuschließen, dass der organisierten Neonaziszene angehörige Personen den Zeugen selbst gefährden oder versuchen, auf diesen einzuwirken, wenn die Möglichkeit durch Kenntnis der Wohnanschrift besteht.

Um eine schriftliche Mitteilung über die Bewilligung des Antrags wird gebeten.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Unterschrift

Return address

To the Public Prosecutor's Office / Police XXX  
Address

Place, Date

**Application to restrict personal information disclosed pursuant to § 68 paras. 2 and 5, StPO  
(Code of Criminal Procedure)**

**Case number/file number**

It is requested that the following full address to which a summons can be send shall be entered in the files instead of the home address of the individual in question:

First name, last name, street, postal code, city

This request expressly includes changing/overwriting/redacting the home address of the individual in question in any documents already on file, such as the initial criminal complaint lodged, testimony, hospital letters, etc.

Justification:

Every witness is permitted to state an address to which a summons can be sent that differs from his or her home address if there is reasonable cause for concern that he/she or persons around him/her are at risk or that witnesses or another person may be unfairly influenced (§68, Paragraph 2 StPO).

This right also applies after examination of the witness has been concluded.

A well-founded cause for concern within the meaning of § 68 (2), Code of Criminal Procedure exists insofar as the physical injury suffered was **EXAMPLE** an act motivated by right-wing ideology. The alleged perpetrators obviously belonged to the right-wing scene and insulted the injured party with racist slogans. It cannot be ruled out that persons belonging to the organized neo-Nazi scene might endanger or attempt to influence the witness if there is a chance that they could discover the witness' home address.

Please be so kind as to send written notification that this request has been approved.

Yours sincerely

Signature

## Status enquiry

Absender mit ladungsfähiger Anschrift

An die Staatsanwaltschaft / Polizei XXX

Adresse

Ort, Datum

***Betr.: Sachstandsanfrage zu meiner Anzeige gegen Unbekannt vom XX.XX.XXXX  
Tagebuchnummer oder Aktenzeichen XXX***

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

ich habe am XX.XX.XXXX eine Anzeige gegen Unbekannt gestellt. Leider habe ich bis heute nichts vom Fortgang des Verfahrens gehört.

Ich möchte Sie bitten, mir den Stand der Ermittlungen mitzuteilen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Unterschrift

Return address (complete address as required for a summons)

To the Public Prosecutor's Office / Police XXX

Address

Place, Date

***Subject: Inquiry regarding my complaint against person or persons unknown of DD.MM.YYYY Case number or file number XXXXX***

Dear Sir, dear Madame,

I filed a complaint against a person or persons unknown on DD.MM.YYYY. Unfortunately, I have not heard anything yet about the progress of proceedings.

I would request that you keep me informed about the status of the investigation.

Yours sincerely

Signature

## Appeal against a case being dropped

Absender mit ladungsfähiger Anschrift

An die Staatsanwaltschaft XXX

Adresse

Ort, Datum

**Betr.: Beschwerde gegen Verfahrenseinstellung vom XXX / Aktenzeichen XXX**

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

gegen die Einstellung des Ermittlungsverfahrens gegen Unbekannt lege ich Beschwerde ein.

**BEISPIEL:** Ich habe die beiden Täter, die mich am Bahnsteig angegriffen hatten, bei meinen regelmäßigen Bahnfahrten noch zweimal in der Nähe des Bahnhofs gesehen. Sie scheinen sich dort öfter aufzuhalten.

Außerdem habe ich den Zugbegleiter der Bahn erneut getroffen. Er hat mir bestätigt, dass er den Angriff gegen mich bezeugen kann. Die Polizei hat sich bis heute nicht bei ihm gemeldet.

Mit seinem Einverständnis teile ich Ihnen seinen Namen und seine Adresse mit: XXX.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Unterschrift

Return address (complete address as required for a summons)

To the Public Prosecutor's Office XXX

Address

Place, Date

**Subject: Appeal against case being dropped in the proceedings on DD.MM.YYYY / file number XXX**

Dear Sir, dear Madame,

I should like to appeal against the decision to terminate the investigation against a person or persons unknown.

**EXAMPLE PLUS REASON:** I have seen the two perpetrators who attacked me on the platform twice near the station during my regular train journeys. They seem to be there fairly frequently.

I also met the train conductor again. He confirmed that he could testify to the attack against me. He has not yet been contacted by the police.

He has agreed that I may communicate his name and address to you: XXX.

Yours sincerely

Signature



**Note:** You do not have to adhere to any particular formal requirements when appealing against a case being dropped. The appeal period is usually two weeks. Since the public prosecutor's office has already examined your complaint, you do not have to repeat the facts of the case. You should present new facts or evidence.

## Disciplinary complaint

Absender mit ladungsfähiger Anschrift

An die Polizei XXX

Adresse

Ort, Datum

### ***Dienstaufsichtsbeschwerde gegen die Mitarbeiter der Polizeiwache XXX-Straße, in XXX***

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

hiermit stelle ich Dienstaufsichtsbeschwerde gegen die Polizeibeamten, die am TT.MM.JJJJ um XX:XX Uhr Dienst in der oben genannten Polizeiwache hatten. Ich wollte dort eine Anzeige stellen, weil ich zuvor

**BEISPIEL:** auf dem Bahnsteig von zwei Mitgliedern der rechten Szene angegriffen worden war. Die Polizeibeamten erklärten mir, dass sie keinen Straftatbestand erkennen könnten, da ich keine sichtbaren Verletzungen hätte.

Ich bitte Sie, das Verhalten dienstrechtlich zu überprüfen und mir den Ausgang dieser Prüfung mitzuteilen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Unterschrift



Return address (complete address as required for a summons)

To the police XXX  
Address

Place, Date

***Subject: Disciplinary complaint against police officers at  
police station XXX street, in XXX***

Dear Sir, dear Madame,

I hereby lodge a disciplinary complaint against the police officers who were on duty on DD.MM.YYYY at XX.XX o'clock in the above-mentioned police station. I wished to report a crime there because

**EXAMPLE** I had been attacked by two members of the right-wing scene on a station platform. The police officers explained to me that they could not identify any criminal offence because I had no visible injuries.

I ask you to carry out an official review of the police officers' conduct and to inform me of the outcome of this official review.

Yours sincerely

Signature

# Appendix: Contact addresses

## Counselling centres for victims of right-wing, racist and anti-Semitic violence

### **Baden-Württemberg** → LEUCHTLINIE - Beratung für Betroffene von rechter Gewalt Landesweite Fach- und Koordinierungsstelle

Reinsburgstraße 82  
70178 Stuttgart



0711 / 888 999 30  
info@leuchtlinie.de  
www.leuchtlinie.de

### **Bavaria** → B.U.D. - Beratung. Unterstützung. Dokumentation für Opfer rechtsextremer Gewalt e.V.

Postfach 44 01 53  
90206 Nürnberg



0151 / 216 53 187 (Hotline)  
info@bud-bayern.de  
www.bud-bayern.de

*München*

### **BEFORE – Beratung und Unterstützung bei Diskriminierung, Rassismus und rechter Gewalt e.V.**

Mathildenstraße 3c  
80336 München



089 / 4622467-0  
kontakt@before-muenchen.de  
www.before-muenchen.de

### **Berlin** → Reach Out - Opferberatung und Bildung gegen Rechtsextremismus, Rassismus und Antisemitismus e.V.

Beusselstr. 35 (Hinterhaus)  
10553 Berlin



030 / 695 683 39  
info@reachoutberlin.de  
www.reachoutberlin.de

**OPRA → Psychological counselling for victims of extreme right-wing racism and anti-Semitic violence**

Beusselstr. 35 (Hinterhaus)  
10553 Berlin



030 / 922 18 241 (AB)  
info@opra-gewalt.de  
www.opra-gewalt.de

**Brandenburg → Opferperspektive e.V.**

Rudolf-Breitscheid-Straße 164  
14482 Potsdam



0331 / 817 00 00  
info@opferperspektive.de  
www.opferperspektive.de

**Bremen → Soliport – Betroffene rechter, rassistischer und antisemitischer Gewalt solidarisch beraten**

c/o LidiceHaus  
Am Deich 60  
28199 Bremen



0421 / 178 31 21 2  
info@soliport.de  
www.soliport.de

**Hamburg → Empower: Beratung, Unterstützung und Solidarität - Beratungsstelle für Betroffene rechter, rassistischer und antisemitischer Gewalt**

c/o Arbeit und Leben e.V.  
Besenbinderhof 60  
20097 Hamburg



040 / 284 016 67  
empower@hamburg.arbeitundleben.de  
www.hamburg.arbeitundleben.de/empower

**Hesse → response. Beratung für Betroffene von rechter und rassistischer Gewalt - Ein Angebot der Bildungsstätte Anne Frank**

c/o Bildungsstätte Anne Frank  
Hansaallee 150  
60320 Frankfurt am Main



069 / 56 000 241  
kontakt@response-hessen.de  
www.response-hessen.de

**Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania → LOBBI – Landesweite Opferberatung, Beistand und Information für Betroffene rechter Gewalt in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern**

*Regionalbüro Ost*

Tilly-Schanzen-Straße 2  
17034 Neubrandenburg



0395 / 455 0718



ost@lobbi-mv.de



www.lobbi-mv.de

*Regionalbüro West*

Hermannstraße 35  
18055 Rostock



0381 / 200 9377



west@lobbi-mv.de

**Lower Saxony → RespAct - Solidarisch mit Betroffenen rechter, rassistischer und antisemitischer Gewalt**

*Standort Hannover*

Fröbelstraße 5  
30451 Hannover



0800 7372286



hannover@respact-nds.de



kontakt@respact-nds.de



respact-nds.de

*Standort Oldenburg*

Bahnhofstraße 11  
26122 Oldenburg



0800 7372286



oldenburg@respact-nds.de

**North Rhine-Westphalia → Opferberatung Rheinland (OBR)**

c/o IDA-NRW e.V.  
Volmerswerther Straße 20  
40221 Düsseldorf



0211 / 15 92 55 64



info@opferberatung-rheinland.de



www.opferberatung-rheinland.de

*Dortmund and Westphalia*

**Back Up - Beratung für Opfer rechtsextremer und rassistischer Gewalt**

Königswall 36  
44137 Dortmund



0231 / 956 524 82



contact@backup-nrw.org



www.backup-nrw.org/

**Rhineland-Palatinate → m\*power – Mobile Beratung von Betroffenen rechter, rassistischer und antisemitischer Gewalt in Rheinland-Pfalz**

Casinostr. 1b (1. Etage)  
56068 Koblenz



0151 / 10 59 47 99  
kontakt@mpower-rlp.de  
www.mpower-rlp.de

**Saxony-Anhalt → Mobile Beratung für Opfer rechter Gewalt in Sachsen-Anhalt**

**Anlaufstelle Süd**

Platanenstraße 9  
06114 Halle an der Saale



0345 / 226 7100  
opferberatung.sued@miteinander-ev.de  
www.miteinander-ev.de

**Anlaufstelle Mitte**

c/o Miteinander e.V.  
Erich-Weinert-Straße 30  
39104 Magdeburg



0391 / 544 67 10  
opferberatung.mitte@miteinander-ev.de

**Anlaufstelle Nord**

Chüdenstraße 4  
29410 Salzwedel



03901/ 30 64 31  
opferberatung.nord@miteinander-ev.de

**Anhalt-Bitterfeld, Wittenberg, Dessau-Roßlau**

**Beratungsstelle für Opfer rechter Gewalttaten**

Parkstraße 7  
06846 Dessau-Roßlau



0340 / 66 12 395  
opferberatung@datel-dessau.de  
www.opferberatung-dessau.de

**Saarland → Beratungsstelle für Opfer von Diskriminierung und rechter Gewalt**

c/o Forschungs- und Transferstelle für  
Gesellschaftliche Integration und Migration (GIM)  
Saaruferstraße 16, 66117 Saarbrücken



0681 / 58 67 209  
giannoulis@gim-htw.de

**Saxony → Support: Opferberatung für Betroffene rechter und rassistischer Gewalt der RAA Sachsen e.V.**

*Beratungsstelle Dresden*

Bautzner Straße 45 / 01099 Dresden



0351 889 41 74



opferberatung.dresden@raa-sachsen.de



www.raa-sachsen.de

*Beratungsstelle Leipzig*

Petersteinweg 3

04107 Leipzig



0341 261 86 47



opferberatung.leipzig@raa-sachsen.de

*Beratungsstelle Chemnitz*

Henriettenstraße 5

09112 Chemnitz



0371 481 94 51



opferberatung.chemnitz@raa-sachsen.de

**Thuringia → ezra – Mobile Beratung für Opfer rechter, rassistischer und antisemitischer Gewalt in Thüringen**

Juri-Gagarin-Ring 96/98

99084 Erfurt



0361 / 218 651 33



info@ezra.de



www.ezra.de

**Schleswig-Holstein → Zebra - Zentrum für Betroffene rechter Angriffe e.V.**

Eichhofstraße 14

24116 Kiel



0431 / 301 40 379



info@zebraev.de



www.zebraev.de

## Material Assistance

### Federal Office of Justice (Bundesamt für Justiz)

Referat III 2 – Opferhilfe –  
53094 Bonn



02 28 / 9 94 10 52 88  
www.bundesjustizamt.de

*Application forms to download:* [https://www.bundesjustizamt.de/DE/SharedDocs/Publikationen/Opferhilfe/Entschaedigungsantrag.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=5](https://www.bundesjustizamt.de/DE/SharedDocs/Publikationen/Opferhilfe/Entschaedigungsantrag.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=5)

### Opferfonds CURA

Amadeu Antonio Stiftung  
Novalisstraße 12  
10115 Berlin



030 / 24 08 86 10  
cura@amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de  
www.opferfonds-cura.de

### Opferhilfefonds des VBRG

Sewanstraße 43  
10319 Berlin



030 / 33 85 97 77  
opferfonds@verband-brg.de  
www.verband-brg.de

### German Bar Association (Deutscher Anwaltsverein) (DAV)

Stiftung Contra Rechtsextremismus und Gewalt  
Littenstraße 11  
10179 Berlin



030 / 72 61 52 139  
dav@anwaltverein.de  
www.anwaltverein.de/  
de/stiftung-contra-rechtsextremismus

## Umbrella organisations of specialised advice and contact points

### Antidiskriminierungsverband Deutschland (advd)

The Antidiskriminierungsverband Deutschland (advd) is an umbrella organisation of independent anti-discrimination offices and advice centres. Its member organisations have many years of experience in anti-discrimination work with a focus on counselling and empowerment of people affected by discrimination.

Sternwartenstraße 21  
04103 Leipzig



0341 / 99 39 78 18  
info@antidiskriminierung.org  
www.antidiskriminierung.org

## PRO ASYL e.V.

The human rights organisation works to promote the rights of refugees and migrants and helps asylum seekers in the asylum process. Pro Asyl researches human rights violations at the borders and advocates an open society in which refugees receive protection. Pro Asyl also provides information on refugee councils in your federal state and on local counselling centres for asylum seekers.

Postfach 160 624  
60069 Frankfurt a.M.



069 / 23 06 88  
proasyl@proasyl.de  
www.proasyl.de

## Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland (ISD)

ISD-Bund e.V.

The initiative's remit is representing the interests of black people in Germany and standing up for justice in the migration society, pointing out racial discrimination, discrimination and exploitation and combatting these phenomena. ISD local groups offer rooms and activities for black children and young people and promote political, black projects. The association advocates an anti-racist attitude in all areas of society.

Lausitzerstraße 10  
10999 Berlin



030 / 698 17 021  
isdbund.vorstand@isd-bund.org  
www.isdonline.de

## OFEK – Beratungs- und Interventionsstelle bei antisemitischer Gewalt und Diskriminierung

OFEK is the counselling and intervention centre to combat anti-Semitic violence and discrimination of the Competence Centre for Prevention and Empowerment of the Central Welfare Office of Jews in Germany (ZWST) based in Berlin. OFEK supports those affected and their social environment throughout Germany in dealing with anti-Semitism and discrimination. The offer includes free individual counselling after anti-Semitic incidents, group counselling and educational interventions.

ZWST e.V.  
Kompetenzzentrum für Prävention  
und Empowerment  
Schönhauser Allee 12  
10119 Berlin



030 / 513 039 88  
beratung@zwst-kompetenzzentrum.de  
www.zwst-kompetenzzentrum.de

Bundesweite Beratungshotline: 030 / 61 08 04 58 und 0176 / 458 755 32



## Recherche- und Informationsstelle Antisemitismus – Bundesweite Koordination (RIAS)

The Anti-Semitism Research and Information Centre Berlin (RIAS), together with Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, has established a reporting network for anti-Semitic incidents. RIAS works to defend the interests of those affected and is oriented towards the needs and perceptions of those affected, their relatives or witnesses of an incident. RIAS also records incidents that have not been reported or do not constitute a criminal offence, publishes information on these at the request of those affected and provides competent psychosocial, legal, anti-discrimination, victim or trial advice. RIAS enables those affected and witnesses to use the strengths of civil society for their specific situation: At their request, civil society can draw the attention of the authorities or political and media actors to their perspective and initiate solidarity processes.

RIAS

c/o VDK e.V.

Gleimstraße 31

10437 Berlin

Mailadress:

Postfach 58 03 50

10413 Berlin



030 / 817 985 818



[info@report-antisemitism.de](mailto:info@report-antisemitism.de)



[www.report-antisemitism.de](http://www.report-antisemitism.de)

## Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma

The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma is the independent umbrella organisation of 16 federal state and member associations. With its headquarters in Heidelberg and a documentation centre in Berlin, it represents the civil and political interests of German Sinti and Roma. The Central Council is committed to equal participation of Sinti and Roma in politics and society and to their protection and promotion as a national minority.

The homepage of the Central Council provides an overview of contact points and offices in each federal state.

Bremeneckgasse 2

69117 Heidelberg



06221 / 98 11 01



[zentralrat@sintiundroma.de](mailto:zentralrat@sintiundroma.de)



[zentralrat.sintiundroma.de](http://zentralrat.sintiundroma.de)

## Amaro Drom e.V.

Amaro Drom e.V. („Our Way“) is an intercultural self-organized youth group of Roma and non-Roma with the aim of creating space for political and social participation for young people through empowerment, mobilization and self-organization. As a federal association, Amaro Drom offers a network of exchange and mutual support between regional associations as well as cooperation with other youth associations.

Prinzenstraße 84 (Aufgang I)

10969 Berlin



030 / 61 62 00 11



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

## **Lesben- und Schwulenverband in Deutschland - Verein für europäische Kooperation e.V. (LSVD)**

With over 4,400 individual members and 100 member organizations, the Lesbian and Gay Association in Germany e.V. (LSVD), which has its main seat in Berlin and an office in Cologne, is Germany's largest citizen's rights and self-help organization of lesbians and gays. The LSVD is represented in all federal states. On the association homepage you will find the contact points and references to other specialised counselling centres for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, intersexual and queer people.

Hülchrather Str. 4  
50670 Köln



0221 / 92 59 61 0



lsvd@lsvd.de



www.lsvd.de

## **Specialised counselling services for refugees, asylum seekers and people without residence status**

### **Medical assistance and counselling for people without residence status and those not covered by health insurance**

#### **Medinetz / Medibüros**

Throughout Germany there are voluntary initiatives and counselling centres which enable people without residence status and without health insurance to receive anonymous, free treatment from qualified medical personnel. An overview of local counselling centres and initiatives can be found on the homepage of the Medibüro network.



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

### **BaFF: Bundesweite Arbeitsgemeinschaft der psychosozialen Zentren für Flüchtlinge und Folteropfer**

Currently, 37 psychosocial treatment centres, initiatives and facilities for medical, psychotherapeutic and psychosocial care and rehabilitation of victims of torture and other serious human rights violations are networked in the BAfF. Names and addresses of institutions in each federal state as well as information and background material on traumatised victims can be found in the section „Facilities for Torture Victims“ on the homepage.

BAfF e.V.  
Paulsenstraße 55-56  
12163 Berlin



030 / 31012463



[info@baff-zentren.org](mailto:info@baff-zentren.org)



[www.baff-zentren.org](http://www.baff-zentren.org)

## Local refugee councils

The refugee councils are independent representations of the self-organized refugee organisations, support groups and solidarity initiatives active in the federal states. The state refugee councils are networked and members of the national working group for refugees PRO ASYL.

You can find an overview with information on the Refugee Council in each federal state and the specialised advisory services each offers on the homepage of the Association of Refugee Councils in the Federal States.




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

## About: VBRG – Association of Counseling Centres for Victims of Right-wing, Racist and Anti-Semitic Violence in Germany

VBRG is committed to providing victims of right-wing, racist and anti-Semitic violence across Germany with access to counseling and support organizations that operate in a professional, independent, free-of-charge and partisan (pro-victim) manner. At present, VBRG comprises 14 independent counseling organizations for people affected by those crimes in twelve of Germany's federal states.

Every year, our member organizations advise and support hundreds of persons. In doing so, they draw on many years of experience and considerable expertise. They support those directly affected by attacks, threats, arson and assault, as well as witnesses and relatives or significant others. This support is provided free of charge, confidentially, on location and in a partisan (pro-victim) manner. Counseling is provided anonymously on request. The counseling services of all of VBRG's member organizations give priority to the victim's perspective and his or her desire to overcome the material and immaterial consequences of an attack.

All too often, right-wing and racist violence and its consequences are ignored, downplayed or never made public. Together with our member organizations, we render the scope of right-wing violence visible by means of reliable monitoring, independently established figures and analyses. In addition to this, the association calls for and supports the nationwide provision of counseling services for victims of right-wing, racist and anti-Semitic violence.



**This guide is aimed at people who have experienced right-wing, racist, antiziganist or anti-Semitic violence, their relatives and friends and witnesses of an attack. This guide is intended to help those affected to find their way in a non-routine situation by giving a brief guide to important questions and decisions.**

[www.verband-brg.de](http://www.verband-brg.de)

