



A documentation by Open Doors Germany

Attacks on Christian refugees

Giving victims a voice
A case study: the refugee reception centre
in Rotenburg an der Fulda, Hesse



OpenDoors

Im Dienst der verfolgten **Christen** weltweit

Cover image: Christian refugee in a German asylum shelter shortly after being violently attacked because of religious reasons. The text displayed on his mobile phone reads "in the name of Jesus Christ, the believers are waiting for your help"; a translation app helped him to find the words in German.

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1 Protecting minorities – Preventing religiously motivated attacks

On 17 October 2016 the human aid and rights organisations AVC (Action on behalf of persecuted Christians and the needy/Nidda), EMG (European Mission Fellowship), Open Doors (Kelkheim) and ZOCD (Central Council of Oriental Christians in Germany/Munich) called a press conference in Berlin. The organisations involved joined forces not only to highlight the lack of protection for Christians and other religious minorities in German asylum and reception centres but also to request effective protective action for those affected (see appendix).

During the press conference the results of an extended survey were presented, a survey which was conducted among refugees by Open Doors with the help of the other organisations between February and September 2016. The survey portrayed 743 people affected: they had endured everything from huge discrimination to death threats and violent attacks in Germany, because of their Christian faith.¹

The publication of a first report had drawn considerable interest from the media and led to an increased and more open public reporting of the issue of religiously motivated attacks against refugees. Yet, no effective, protective action for members of religious minorities within these facilities followed.

At times, the public discussion on attacks against refugees was diverted away from the source of the attacks and away from finding effective protective mechanisms, and was instead directed towards the possible results of an open discussion regarding such a sensitive matter. At the press conference on 17 October Markus Rode warned against generalizing judgements against Muslims and made it clear once again that the organisations involved do not have any political agenda.

However, the human right of religious freedom and the protection of victims in a country like Germany – that is a constant admonisher of human rights abuses on an international scale – should not be sacrificed for political objectives or the interests of individual groups. It is therefore everybody's duty to take action, so that the protection of the victims can be guaranteed. To remain inactive, to trivialise or to remain silent due to political or other reasons, is to be just as guilty as those who exploit the situation for political reasons.

¹ https://www.opendoors.de/downloads/Berichte/Open_Doors_Survey_Religiously_motivated_attacks_on_Christian_refugees_in_Germany_2016.pdf, 20.08.2016.

THE KEY ROLE OF FACILITY OPERATORS AND MANAGEMENT

Operators and the management of the refugee facilities play a pivotal role in the protection of religious minorities as well as in the analysis and clarification of attacks. It is absolutely understandable that they want to present their facilities as well run operations. The emergence of religiously motivated conflicts and their handling under public scrutiny are clearly the complete opposite of what they are trying to achieve. What makes the matters worse is the fact that the victims of religiously motivated attacks are a minority and the reasons why Muslims attack Christians and other religious minorities are not well known to facilities' operators and management. For this reason, religiously motivated attacks are either not recognised or they are deliberately trivialised as general conflicts between refugees. That is why Christians have no other options but to keep quiet and hide their faith, thus enduring the attacks, or to confide in trustworthy Christians and/or NGOs, as well as the police. Because the police depend on the cooperation of the management and personnel of the facilities, experience shows that the chance of getting to the root of the problem is next to zero.

The example of the state reception centre in Rotenburg an der Fulda, Hesse, shows how this dilemma can be avoided, to a certain degree. This case highlights the fact that there are ways to manage religiously motivated conflicts in such a way that the imminent threat to Christian refugees and other religious minorities can be handled effectively.

This case also gives politicians an example of how to initiate effective preventative mechanisms to protect religious minorities and how to effectively resolve conflicts, while still taking account of victims' views.

GIVING THE VICTIMS A VOICE – THE EXAMPLE IN ROTENBURG AN DER FULDA

One of the main objectives in analysing and clarifying the incidents in the Hesse state reception centre in Rotenburg an der Fulda was, firstly, to give the victims of attack a voice. The survey and personal contact with the victims provided insights into the day-to-day realities of a religious minority: these help with drawing up adequate measures in response.

The Rotenburg reception centre is in many ways a helpful example. Firstly, 32 refugees agreed to have their experiences of religiously motivated attacks documented. Open Doors has also been informed about further accounts where the victims were too afraid to have their experiences documented on paper. It is only due to the willingness of the facility management, the police and other involved parties to cooperate, that we have such a huge amount of reports to assess. The way that the events have been processed could be used as an example for other refugee centres.

The report at hand though with minor changes has been handed to the Minister of the Interior of the state of Hesse, Peter Beuth, in a personal meeting with Markus Rode, CEO of Open Doors Germany. The Minister of the Interior promised that he would deal with this problem in his federal state intensively. In the meantime the interior and the social ministries of the state of Hesse in collaboration with the church representatives have developed an action plan to optimise the safety of those aggrieved through religious conflicts. At the beginning of October, Open Doors received a summarised overview of the respective measures. They are presented in chapter 5 of this report and are also part of the Open Doors report “Lack of protection for religious minorities in Germany”, published on 17 October 2016.²

2 <https://www.opendoors.de/survey-refugees>

2 The order of events in Rotenburg

The reception centre in Rotenburg is a large compound outside of the inner city and is a former German military barracks. The buildings are surrounded by areas of lawn, with paved streets in-between. Besides the living and recreation quarters, there is also a canteen and a gymnasium, etc.

About 700 refugees from many different countries are living here. The statistics fluctuate but about 70% of those living here are Muslims, 10% are Christians and 20% belong to other religious groups. A social service provider covers catering, supervision and accommodation, while a security service provides protection for the centre; medical needs are taken care of by health care services.

At the start of the survey, 49 Christians from Iraq, Iran, Eritrea and Ethiopia were living in the quarters.

WHAT TRIGGERED THE SURVEY

On the night of 2–3 June 2016, a mass brawl started in the refugee reception centre, which involved 60 people. The police had to restore order in the facility and different media took up the case.³ All the media reports pointed to a drunken refugee as the culprit. Emre Kostic, member of an Aramaic-Armenian free church in Bebra who has good contacts in the reception centre, suspects other factors came into play. He was already aware of religious tensions and threats, especially towards the Christians who visit his church. The church of Jesus Christ in Bebra is heavily involved with refugees in the current areas of conflict in the Middle East – from Iraq to the south-east of Turkey. Because of his own background and coming from this region, Kostic knows very well the threat to which Christians who are living in a Muslim majority are exposed. He approached the Rotenburg city hall, requesting protective measures for the Christian refugees, and sent a similar request to the Mayor of Bebra while also contacting several government authorities. There was basically no response. “They said: ‘We will look into it...’ but I realised that not much was going to happen.” That is why he then got in touch with Open Doors and the Central Council of Eastern Christians in Germany (ZOCD, task force refugees), who then contacted the reception centre. The facility manager, Thomas Baader, indicated his willingness to cooperate, in order to get to the bottom of these prevailing and difficult circumstances.

SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION DESPITE RESISTANCE

The following course of events – from the processing through to the implementation of protective measures – has been exemplary in many ways. Therefore, it has been documented in this paper in the hope that it will serve as a template for other comparable facilities. In doing so it has become obvious that these are not merely isolated incidents: the majority of the non-Muslim

3 <http://www.hna.de/lokales/rotenburg-bebra/rotenburg-fulda-ort305317/schlaegerei-nacht-polizei-einsatz-rotenburger-fluechtlingsunterkunft-hna-6457005.html>, 19.08.2016.

refugees in the Rotenburg reception centre describe the same traumatising experiences. Of the 49 Christians in the facility, over half of them were willing to have their experiences documented. This suggests that there are thousands of other Christian refugees in German asylum shelters who are suffering the same or similar experiences and are receiving no help at all.

A safe environment for the victims

Within the Rotenburg reception centre the victims were provided with a safe environment where they had the opportunity to share their experiences in private. They were assured that all documentation and the usage thereof would be kept anonymous. The secure environment created an enabling atmosphere to assuage the victims' fears so that they could open up and share what they had gone through.

Handling the issue in public

The investigation deliberately took place openly within the facility and in front of the offenders. That was an important signal to spell out unmistakably that any attack will be officially investigated and that the values of the constitutional democracy will also be upheld within these facilities.

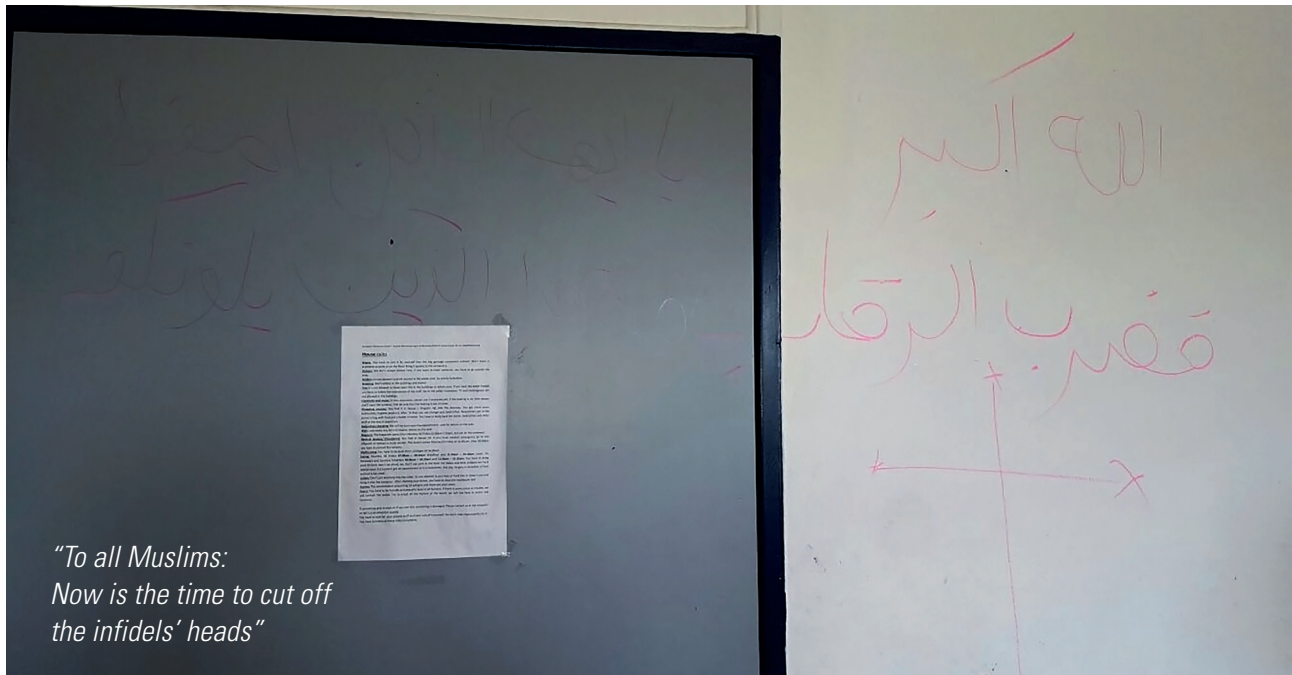
Effective collaboration

The excellent cooperation of the parties involved – the facility manager, government authorities, the police and the task force refugees of the ZOCD through to the church in Bebra – was essential to the success of the inquiry.

It was the collective effort in the weeks that followed that made it possible to document successfully what the 32 refugees experienced. Because of their faith, they were discriminated against, insulted and even given death threats. In one case, an interview was interrupted. Yet others, mainly from Syria and Iraq, did not want their experiences documented at all, for fear of reprisal against themselves or their family abroad.

DEATH THREATS AND EVACUATION

On the evening of the 10 July, another incident occurred in the Rotenburg reception centre. Several refugees returned from a church service in the aforementioned church in Bebra. In one of the rooms they found a message in Arabic which basically said: "To all Muslims: now is the time to behead the unbelievers." The ZOCD was informed again while the security personnel followed the requests of the affected residents and informed the police. The refugees also informed their friends in the church. The police then voiced an explicit reprimand towards the Muslim residents and threatened to relocate those responsible if there were any further religiously motivated attacks. The Christians' situation was still so insecure that, after the police and the facility



management discussed the matter, they both approved the temporary accommodation of the victims in the premises of the Church of Jesus Christ in Bebra. What tipped the scale towards this decision was when one of the security staff's relatives tried to trivialise the situation. In that highly sensitive situation, he tried to play down the incident and claimed that the Christian converts' true motivation for professing Christianity was the desire to raise their chances of having asylum granted to them.

COEXISTING ON A NEW BASIS

The new flare-up and the data that has been collected up to this point forced the management of the facility to take unusual measures. Without any delay and for the time being, the Christians were housed separately within the compound. Over and above that, because of continued problems with some of the Muslim staff, the decision was made that the supervision of the Christian refugees should only be carried out by Christian personnel. The Christian staff already present in the Rotenburg reception centre were then deployed for this task.

Another step was taken by the manager of the reception centre: he firmly addressed all Muslim staff regarding the religiously motivated attacks. He stressed that such attacks should not be allowed to happen again and that he would be keeping his eye on them.

Under these circumstances, the relocated refugees returned to the Rotenburg reception centre on 11 July.

CAUSE AND EFFECT – ISLAMIC STRUCTURES AND MENTALITIES

As we searched for the reasons why these conflicts kept on occurring, the Islamic-influenced structures and mentalities within the Rotenburg reception centre kept on surfacing. These structures are not to be understood as if they are being planned and installed from above with workforces and an establis-

A SHORT EVALUATION OF EVENTS

hed chain of command. Yet, if we take a look into the mainly Islamic countries from which many of these refugees come, and consider how they treat religious minorities, it is obvious that their understanding of Islam is most definitely not compatible with the idea of religious freedom and the equality of all people as stipulated in the German constitution. Thus, it is justified to speak of systematic attacks, because the cultural and religious influence of a large number of refugees is based on the teachings of the Quran, something which is deeply ingrained.

The situation in the Rotenburg reception centre is no different from many other, comparable facilities where Muslims have been living long enough to establish their own Islamic parallel society. Daily interaction and the desire to sustain one's own culture lead to a reinforcing of the usual, expected behaviour from their respective home countries. If we look at it from a Muslim perspective, their desire to safeguard their Muslim identity is fully understandable. The fact that those who follow another religion are thus suffering from the consequences is a normal and well known side effect. Even among moderate Muslims, the way of thinking which resides in the Quran, that non-Muslims are infidels and impure is a widespread reality. This understanding of Islam is considered as one of the greatest imaginable goods in those countries where most of the refugees come from. It is considered as the last revelation and striving towards the total submission of all people under Allah.

According to the Christian refugees' description of these hierarchical structures within the quarters, they display a striking disregard of German law.

It is not uncommon, that a lack of understanding of Islam, and the cultural background of the refugees, fosters disregard for the source of conflict resulting in flawed investigations.

In Rotenburg this became apparent after numerous reports mentioned one of the staff members at the Info Point. This contact point plays a key role in the integration of new refugees – and it was at this particular locality where the Christian refugees experienced a great deal of discrimination.

THE CHURCH PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

As we review the events in Rotenburg, the important role of the Church of Jesus Christ in Bebra needs to be highlighted. It was their excellent support that effectively made it possible to give the victimised refugees much needed protection. That entailed not only the flow of information but also much needed practical assistance. It also involved the continued supervision of the Christian refugees and their selfless commitment during the critical phase, when the death threats became known. Eastern churches especially should be involved much more, not only when it comes to the supervision of Christian refugees, but also in terms of being engaged in government consultations as standards are developed for the running of refugee facilities. That would not only boost the process of integration but it would also decrease civil services' workload.

CONCLUSIONS

The number of documented incidents in the Rotenburg reception centre primarily underlines the considerably amount of action needed to protect religious minorities. It is self-evident that the insights gained in this case are representative of the situations in similar facilities where no research to this extent has been done so far. In this case the resolving of the state of affairs in Rotenburg can be used as a positive example. It was only possible because the media reported on the violent disputes between the refugees and because of the tireless commitment towards the refugees on the part of the pastor from the Christian church in Rotenburg and of ZOCD (refugee task force). Another important element in assessing what happened was the willingness of the Rotenburg reception centre manager to cooperate: thus, with further help from the police and civil services, the motives and triggers for the attacks could be uncovered and attended to. Last but not least, the ultimate contribution came from the 49 victims who were willing to describe the situations they faced, even as they co-existed with the perpetrators, endangering their lives, without knowing if they would eventually be granted asylum. 32 out of this group were courageous enough to give their consent for the written documentation of their testimonies.

In the end it was the interaction of all these factor that made it possible to help the victims of these attacks and resolved a difficult situation. Since this facility implemented these new measures, no further incidents of religiously motivated attack towards those interviewed have been registered.

All the cases documented in this assessment are also included into the Open Doors survey.

IMPROVING THE PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES – SUGGESTIONS

In addition to the demands made in the extended survey released in October, Open Doors also recommends the following measures:

- >> Standard procedure should be that Christians and members of other religious minorities should be employed on all levels of the support staff.
- >> For the asylum process, all Christians must have Christian interpreters so that any deliberate or accidental distortions concerning their asylum procedures can be prevented. The insights gained in this sort of safe environment could lead to completely different results than those gained in a regular interview setting overshadowed by the trauma of the interviewee. In addition, where this has not been done yet, control procedures for interpreters should be implemented in order to discover any failure to accurately pass on reports of attacks.
- >> Staff members of the facilities should not only support Christians living in the quarters so that they have access to Eastern churches in the region, but also commit to connecting them to local churches.
- >> In the case of any family affiliation between refugees and support staff, it is vital that religious impartiality is guaranteed and that effective supervision is employed on a regular basis.

- >> The facility's management and staff members must be educated about the religious motives behind discrimination against Christians and other religious minorities by Muslims whose native countries have an Islamic majority. It must be ensured that under no circumstances the flow of information is hindered, thus preventing the omission or change of details.

With the help of a pre-prepared guideline within the framework of integration, all asylum seekers in the quarters must be educated explicitly about religious freedom and specifically be informed on the rights of Christians and other religious minorities (including moderate Muslims) within refugee facilities and reception centres. Asylum seekers keep mentioning that they have received either inadequate or no information at all regarding their rights and duties in Germany. These have to be communicated in the reception centres with all clarity.

3 Living together during Ramadan

The Islamic month of fasting, Ramadan, is key for the majority of the Muslims living in German refugee facilities. During this time, Muslims are expected to abstain from all foods between sunrise and sunset. Physical abstinence does have an effect on their emotional state. In Rotenburg it had the same negative impact within the refugee quarters as it had in other German refugee facilities. Many pre-existing, underlying conflicts surfaced during Ramadan.

Using Ramadan as an example actually reveals how refugee quarters are much more aligned to the needs of Muslims, which then often has substantial side effects for the other residents. In May 2016 a special Ramadan training programme was set up in all German refugee centres. In many places, food and mealtimes were adjusted to comply with the specific needs of the Muslim majority. Wherever these specific adaptations were not made or guaranteed, situations escalated (eg malicious arson in a Düsseldorf centre⁴ on 9 June 2016). No comparable arrangements were made for Christians ie during the pre-Easter Lent period.

A CONFLICT-FILLED LENT – OBSERVATIONS BY STAFF AND THE INJURED PARTIES

During the day it was relatively quiet in the quarters. During Ramadan, most of the Muslim refugees were sleeping for long hours in order to evade hunger. Some of those who were awake during lunchtime occasionally visited the canteen, victimising those residents who were not complying with Ramadan. Even moderate Muslim refugees or smokers hid 'inappropriate' behaviour to avoid conflicts.

As the evening approached, the non-Muslim residents disappeared into their rooms as the fasting Muslim residents woke up and started to prepare to break their fast. Many non-Muslims barricaded themselves in their rooms as they feared being attacked.

LIGHTS OUT AT 4AM

At night, when it was supposed to be quiet, the quarters were filled with music, loud chants and unrestricted pub-

lic Muslim prayers. The overcrowded canteen was filled with the noise of crockery and other tableware. Outside children were playing, fighting and making a noise; they were riding their bikes or played ball, even in the stairways. It was obviously unavoidable because they were not allowed to play during the day. Any requests to keep the noise down was to no avail and generally had the potential to spark further conflicts with Christians and other non-Muslim believers. Christians would take turns to keep watch at night and tried to avoid the bath rooms during these times. They also kept their windows closed to keep the water pipes' smoke out of their rooms. At about 4-5am things would slowly quieten down.

Breakfast usually ends the next morning at 8.30 am. This turned out to be a really big problem because the nightly activities upset people's daily rhythm so badly that only a few managed to make it to the canteen in the morning. Those who did actually make it had their breakfast knowing that any further consumption of food, alcohol and nicotine would only lead to further conflicts if they were to be detected. Thus, most of the non-Muslims had their first meal of the day at lunchtime. A collective supper was not possible during Ramadan because the Muslims usually broke the fast only around 10 pm.

CONDEMNING CHRISTIANS AS IMPURE

In general, the Muslim refugees avoided any contact with non-Muslims during Ramadan – fearing defilement and becoming impure. They said it would render the validity of their fasting null and void. This fear gave birth to rather peculiar behaviour that was very much in line with the Muslim way of thinking. Muslims avoided touching any common objects (eg body contact with toilet seats) so that they had no indirect contact with 'infidels'. Sanitation became extremely poor. It was unclear who was going to be responsible for cleaning up the faeces, which then led to frequent conflicts within the community. In other facilities problems also arose eg collective kitchens, laundry rooms and recreation facilities.

⁴ <http://www.saarbruecker-zeitung.de/politik/themen/sz-politik/Duesseldorf-Brandstiftung-Haftbefehle-Mord-Muslime-Ramadan;art449427,6167236>, 19.08.2016.

Because this year Ramadan was during the summertime, many non-Muslim men and woman preferred to wear summer clothes. Many Muslims also disapproved of this behaviour and clearly voiced their displeasure.

"The Afghans does not want to use the same washing machine we wash with because to them we are unworthy and impure."

"From the moment the Afghans knew that we are Christians, they disinfected the bathroom every time we used it. They call us infidels, neciz [=impure], won't shake our hands and are very careful to not have any physical contact with us."

[from Report # 5]

CONCLUSIONS REGARDING RAMADAN

The protection of religious freedom also includes the celebration of Ramadan. Experiences in refugee facilities such as the reception centre in Rotenburg shows that much needs to be done in this regard to improve the way these situations are handled. Celebrating Ramadan should not result in German law being flouted, ie public order, keeping the peace at night, abiding by child and young person protection laws. Clarity on these issues is an absolute necessity, if we are to facilitate sound integration.

Over and above all this, freedom of religion must be guaranteed and no religious minorities should suffer discrimination due to the practice of another religion, as many have. This is especially true when non-Muslim refugees, who have already had negative experiences in their home countries under Muslim-majority rule, are traumatised and need special care. It is very important that we also look at the situation through their eyes, to be able to understand their plight

4 Testimonies of 32 refugees affected by religiously motivated attacks in Rotenburg

10 JUNE – 6 JULY 2016

Participants: **36 People, 32 questionnaires completed**

Nationalities: **Iranian, Syrian, Eritrean, Ethiopian and Iraqi**

ANONYMISED VERSION OF INTERVIEWS

For security reasons, the names of all the interviewees have been changed; in a small number of cases some other minor changes have been made concerning e.g. locations.

No. 1

3 June 2016 – Midnight

It was dark and foggy outside as I went to smoke a cigarette in front of the door. A group with about six or seven men were standing between house #1 and house #10, screaming: "Kill all Iranians and rape the Iranian woman until they are all dead!" They repeated these cries twice.

Because of the fog I couldn't recognise who it was. I was very afraid and quickly ran back into my room to call a few of my friends. Together we went back down again.

Two or three Afghan women told me that there was a fight going on and that the men had knives.

One woman fell unconscious and we thought somebody had been murdered. We were really very afraid.

For us Iranians it is very dangerous here because they (Muslims) now have the permission to kill us. I read it in the Quran myself: we are now allowed to be killed. The Quran states that Christians are allowed to be murdered. Whoever converts from Islam to another Religion should be killed. Islam allows the killing of Christians, because we are perceived as *mortad* [= banished]. Whoever has been banished may also be killed. After I read that in the Quran, spilling of blood, violence and murdering without punishment, that was when I changed my religion.

I am afraid to leave the camp because they can now kill me any time.

That was a terrible night and I am shocked. Every Iranian heard their cries because it was so loud. Everybody in the camp heard it. They said it out loud, everywhere: "Whoever finds an Iranian woman today may rape and kill her. Kill them all. You may kill and rape them. You can do it, everywhere. Wherever you find them, you may do that."

We came here to live a free life, but now we are being oppressed heavily. It is just like the Daesh [=the Islamic State]: we feel very oppressed.

When I arrived here, Pakistani and Afghan men asked me if I was a Christian or a Muslim. I told them that I won't be answering that question. I didn't want to tell anyone that I am a Christian for it is in my heart.

I am living here under constant pressure and cannot take it any more. Nobody is allowed to know that I am a Christian, for I am afraid that they might find out about it in Iran. I am living under constant fear and oppression.

We Iranians have to leave the camp, because of these incidents it has just become too dangerous for us here. I am also being harassed by another man from a different city, who knows that I am living here. He also has contacts in Iran, which is why I am in fear for the lives of my son and my husband.

It is better for me to leave this camp because of the religious conflicts here. Baha'i, Zarathustra and Jews don't hate us Christians: we get along very well with them. The Muslims, though, have huge problems with us and the majority here are Muslims, the majority of the Pakistanis are Muslims while we, the Iranian Christians are in the minority.

No. 2

In another reception centre I had a Muslim housemate: she took my Bible and tore it apart. It was recorded in writing.

[Change of scenery – Rotenburg]

During the big fight on the 3 June 2016 I heard a Man shouting: "Wherever you find the Iranian women, rape and kill them. Because you attacked our families, we will now attack you. If you find Iranian women outside of the camp, rape them and kill them, wherever you find them."

He said that to us because we are Christians. In the Quran it is written that you should kill the infidels wherever you find them and that it is halal [=kosher, acceptable].

They said that to 25 people. I don't have any problems with the people in the camp, neither male nor female, except this man and Tarek.

Since then I just don't leave the premises any more. I only go to church because we are being collected and they bring us back when we go there.

The Muslim women are also a problem because they want to dictate to us what to wear. More than once they demanded that I should not wear any T-shirts or skirts. They said their husband would stare at us.

In Iran I had a major problem because my husband was a radical, fanatical Muslim who tried to force me to veil myself. I fled from Iran because I want to live and now the same is happening to me here, again. I am living in fear here,

in this accommodation, because again everybody is asking me: "Why are you a Christian?" I fled from these attacks and now I have to live with it in such a confined space.

Because of my health problems, I was in a coma for three weeks in Iran: this situation is really very difficult for me to endure.

When I am asked in the German language course which religion I have and say, I am a Christian, everybody gets angry and tells me to keep quiet. In this camp you are in constant fear of what will happen afterwards.

Because of my heart disease, I cannot lock my room and need to go for frequent walks. After these incidents I just don't have the courage to leave my room any more and it really finishes me off.

No. 3

My problems with the Muslims started before 3 June 2016. Although I am an atheist, I enjoy visiting the Bible study and the service of the Church of Jesus Christ in Bebra. I always go to the Bible study with the other Iranians.

When we went shopping, some Afghans insulted us, calling us 'infidels' and 'religious traitors' just because many of us are Christians. They are constantly picking on us and insulting us because we are Iranian and they know that we go to the church service and Bible study. The Afghans in the accommodation also know Afghans who are living in Rotenburg, not far away from the reception centre. That is also why we are afraid to spend our spare time outside of the accommodation.

When doing sports, we are also insulted, that is why I wear earplugs: that way I don't have to hear the things they say.

Regarding the incidents on the 3 June 2016

I only got there when almost everything was over and helped to keep them apart. The Afghans cheered up their friends and said they should really beat them up because they are infidels. They wanted us to die. After everything calmed down, the Afghans put their heads together that same night and decided to provoke us again, hoping that one of us infidels would then get killed so that they could get into heaven. Esat screamed out during the fight, that we should all come outside if we are real men. He didn't want the security staff to be involved. Tarek and his friends are often outside, discussing and planning how and where they want provoke the next fight, so that they can hurt Christians. During the fight the Afghans were encouraging each other to not hold back, seeing that they would only be transferred somewhere else and receive no real punishment.

When I was at the police, the Afghan interpreter did not translate correctly. When I said that I returned to the camp at 5pm, the interpreter said I returned at about 8 or 9pm. I notified the policeman, who then told the interpreter to translate correctly. I don't really know what was taken down but I would like to.

I would really like to be transferred somewhere else. I am afraid of getting killed. The Afghans are not joking when they talk about killing and many of them have turned into Taliban. I wish I could find a place close to a church, away from the Muslims, so that I have my peace and live safely. It is better to live together peacefully no matter what religion you belong to, but in this case, there is no other option than to be separated from the Muslims.

No. 4

My eight-year-old son was attacked by an Afghan child about the same age, for no reason at all. The children said terrible things and beat him just because he comes from Iran. With brute force they tried to convince him that all Iranians are bad. It was pure racism. That was at the end of April 2016.

3 June 2016

During that big conflict a few men shouted that the Iranian women are unbelievers. Within the accommodation it is well known that most of the Iranians converted from Islam to Christianity. To say we are unbelievers is a huge insult to us. The Muslim men deliberately provoke us by dishonouring the Iranian women, knowing that they are crossing the line. They did that to provoke an argument. The fight began at 1am; I could hear everything from outside my window.

The Muslim men tried to provoke us almost daily by dishonouring our wives. Yesterday, when I walked through quarters with my wife, an Afghan or Pakistani deliberately stared at my wife, trying to provoke an argument. I really tried hard to contain myself and pushed my wife behind my back.

I fled from Iran, which to me was like living in hell. Radical Islam politics and religion get mixed together, creating a system which is completely filled with radical Islamic thinking. The Muslims in this reception centre [...] calls us [...] infidels because we converted from Islam to Christianity. They say the infidels must die. That is Sharia law. They might not admit it – but, if I am a Muslim then it is evident that whoever converts to another religion and does not follow Islam, must die. Whether they admit it or not, a Muslim cannot just remove the idea – that those who convert from Islam must die – out of his head.

Our only mistake in Iran was that we belonged to a religious minority. [...] But here in Germany and especially in this facility [...] hostile Muslims are constantly confronting us due to our conversion to Christianity.

No. 5

I feel threatened here because my Iranian housemates and I are being persecuted in many ways by our Muslim residents because of our Christian faith. I didn't expect that to happen here in Germany. I have experienced that in Iran but here it feels worse.

I wanted to warn the facility management ten days before that big fall-out, because the Afghans kept on provoking us and looking for a reason to kill us

Christian Iranians. Because I can speak Turkish, I spoke to Mayla. I summoned her to come to me because the Afghan interpreter Faiza was at the Info Point and never took us seriously.

Mayla said that she couldn't do anything as long as nothing had happened. Mrs Müller was also summoned and said that she cannot do anything even though we have received death threats unless something happens. She said that the only thing she could do was to call the police, after something has happened. I told her that it is not only my problem but it concerns the whole community. Then I told her, that obviously nobody really cares if someone gets killed.

When I go to the laundry room to wash my clothes, the two Afghan women that are working there try to provoke me [...]. Sometimes they would return my clothes still completely wet or even unwashed, they did that with many of us Iranians. Sometimes they would even take our clothes out of the washing machine while it is still being washed. Moreover, the Afghans do not want to use the same washing machine we wash with because to them we are unworthy and impure [...] If I had to quarrel with those two Afghan women, then I, as an Iranian convert, would automatically be condemned. That is why I just keep my mouth shut.

[The interpreter stated that he had experienced the same ie he also had his washing returned unwashed in several cases.]

From the moment the Afghans knew that we are Christians, they disinfected the bathroom every time we used it. They call us infidels or neciz [= impure], won't shake our hands and are very careful to not have any physical contact with us. They say that we are all stupid because we have turned our back on Islam. Whenever we walk pass them, they would say that they would go to heaven if they would kill us. They constantly point their fingers at us and call us kafir [= unbelievers].

I would really like to have a bicycle licence. I live in the same quarter where the Info Point is and still I never get notified when the registration for the next course can be made. When the registration takes place, the Afghans suddenly comes to the Info Point from all over the facility to register and we are just not informed when it is taking place.

Since the start of Ramadan, we have not had a single quiet night. They are extremely loud outside, making a huge noise and clanking with the crockery. We are afraid that they might storm into our rooms. We cannot sleep and rest at night and during the day we have to be so careful that they don't provoke us. There are just too many of them and they are everywhere.

Before 3 June 2016 when I filed a charge against Tarek and also after the incident on 3 June 2016, I told the police about the problems we have with the Muslims, but they only said that we should then not leave the camp by ourselves. That is the reason why we are never alone outside of the facilities.

Time after time, we report harassments at the Info Point but they just send us away again. Instead of listening to us, we are reprimanded not to cause any problems otherwise we will be displaced to another camp which is even worse.

As a Christian it is my duty to be friendly and to forgive. The Islam religion states, though, that conversion from Islam to Christianity deserves the death penalty. In Islam that is normal and the Muslims think that they fulfil their purpose when they kill someone who has left Islam. They will do anything to either kill us or hurt us so badly so that we die from the injuries. It is thus easy to assume that we could die in a normal argument. If one of us happen to die at the hands of a Muslim, you could assume that it was only a normal argument.

[Question: "Do you think that any of the Muslims would kill other people in this facility if they could?"]

I don't think so, I know so.

If one of us Christians happened to die, accidentally, during an argument with the Afghans, then they would see it as the fulfilment of Allah's will.

I can only sleep when somebody is willing to do the nightwatch. We are afraid they might enter our rooms and one of us might get killed. The Muslims perceive that as a great honour. For that reason we take turns with the nightwatch. It is a threatening situation.

Two of them are particularly dangerous. The first one is called Tarek and the other one's name is Esat. He gives the orders and decides if someone should get beaten up or not.

The problem is that the radical Muslim refugees bring their radical worldview with them under which we are suffering. Please, get us out of here into separate accommodation.

No. 6

There is no protection in this camp for me – not even when I go to the toilet or when I have lunch. We have no protection. I have had trouble with Tarek on a number of occasions [...] In the beginning he obviously didn't know that we are Christians yet. After he found out that we were regularly go to church, it became really bad. Tarek starts an argument with every man we have contact with. If I happen to speak to somebody today, then he would follow him and start an argument.

Eventually we saw a church from our window but didn't know which denomination it belonged to and how to get into contact with those Christians. The interpreter seems to have a hard time with us at the Info Point and is generally more focused on the Afghans.

Please find a separate accommodation for us Christians and take more notice of the Christians. We have fled from our countries because we didn't want to live in fear any more. The Christian refugees should get connected to church the moment they arrive in the refugee centres.

No. 7

3 June 2016

I don't really know anything about the fight on 3 June 2016 except that the other women were all very stirred up. They warned me and my mother not to walk around by ourselves any more, because the Afghans were shouting everywhere, that we should be raped whenever we are found alone somewhere. We were very afraid and didn't leave the facilities alone any more.

[...]

I cannot even go to the toilet at night. If at night, I really have to go urgently, then I don't leave the room in my nightgown any more. I first get dressed completely, out of fear that something might happen.

I also don't have the freedom to make a complaint at the Info Point any more. Once, my mother and I complained about him (a very aggressive man) but Faiza said that she is not responsible for that and we should just tolerate it.

We don't know how to protect ourselves. Because of what the interpreter said, we decided to not lay any further complaints at the Info Point.

The Muslim men have a strange view of women and that is dangerous for us. That is why I am very cautious of what I am wearing to attract no attention. If we wear T-shirts then the devout and religious men would stare at us very angrily. I feel extremely intimidated and don't feel safe here. In this camp the people do have a pretty strange way of thinking. I am under constant pressure and cannot move about freely.

The way to protect us is if we are resided outside of this facility. We are constantly being insulted here because we have decided to become Christians.

No. 8

About two months ago I was still new here and received two new roommates from Afghanistan. In order for me to read my Bible secretly, I hung a bedsheet from the bed above. Had they realised that I was reading the Bible and it spread around, I would have had serious problems because I was sharing a room with these two Afghans.

I actually had a good relationship with the Muslims here. But one day when I greeted them they suddenly refused to shake my hand, gave me a wicked look

and were quite aggressive towards me. They then suddenly said: "We are going to kill you," and, "We are going to beat you up."

This happened after they had seen me and other Iranians leave the premises on Wednesdays and Sundays carrying Bibles with us. They constantly try and stop us from going there. The Arabs followed us and shouted: "Islam good, Islam good, no Christian, no Christian!"

The Arabs sometime follow us when we check out just to see where we are going and who is going along. We try and leave in groups at different times. Those who are then picked up after us always tell us the bad comments they had to endure. Afterwards they would then check in again.

The Arabs even went into the room of one Iranian family who also use to come to church, threatening them, and told them that they are Muslims and not Christians: they should return to Islam. They paid them a visit several times.

Sometimes I would stay in my room for several days and when I do leave to go shopping I never leave the premises alone. I call the other Christians to come with me. The Muslims would beat me up outside of the camp because I converted from Islam to Christianity. The first room I had, had a toilet in the passage which I couldn't use at night. The ten Afghans who also had their rooms in the passage constantly harassed me.

I went to the Info Point to get permission to change rooms. I claimed that I wanted to learn German with a friend in another quarter. I didn't say that I was afraid. The interpreter is an Afghan called Faiza and I wasn't bold enough to tell her that I was actually afraid of the Afghan refugees in my room who were harassing me.

One of the Iranians got attacked by the Afghans once because of a bottle of beer. They reported it to Faiza but she didn't forward it to her superiors. She said it was his own fault because he had a bottle of beer with him. The offending Afghan was not even reprimanded. That's why I only told Umar that I wanted to change rooms.

After changing rooms, nothing changed. I am still being insulted and instructed to return to Islam. Many Muslims look angrily at me: they listen at my door and windows to see if we are talking to each other about our faith. Although they are talking themselves, they then report us at the Info Point saying we are disturbing them at night thus getting us into trouble with Faiza.

We fled from Iran because we couldn't live out our Christian faith freely there. I don't want to be confronted with the same problem here in Germany. Christians and Muslims should under no circumstances be forced to live together in such confined spaces. For me, as a Christian, it is not a problem to live together with Muslims, but many of the Afghans and Arabs have problems with us. They have a problem with the fact that we converted and that is why our lives are in

danger. It is particularly dangerous to be near the Arabs because we do not understand their language. I actually don't support the idea of divided accommodations but in this dangerous situation it would be the best for everybody.

No. 9

On 2 June 2016 they said to me: "We are going to kill you, we will tear your liver out and tear it in pieces." They said that I had sold my religion and I am an infidel. One of them lifted up his T-shirt to show me his scar he got from a knife attack and said that he is crazy and that he wouldn't mind killing me.

We are too scared to go outside with our daughters because we are constantly being harassed by the Afghans due to our Christian faith. They make fun of us and mock us as they gesticulate and crucifix themselves, they throw kisses at us and make obscene gestures with their mouths when we pass by. They disturb us when we have our meals as they are persistently making obscene gestures with their tongues even in front of our daughters. My children are what I am living for: I fled and came to Germany so that my daughters could have a future.

In the night before 2 June, I went to them because I wanted to talk to them. They said they have come to argue. That's why I then left them again and even wished them a good night.

On 2 June 2016, a group of several Afghan men came to me, pushed me against the wall and told me to become a Muslim and that I am hypocrite.

I do sports and love running and jogging. They once grabbed me while I was doing sports in the Neckermann Facility and held a knife at my neck. They said that because I had sold my religion, they are allowed to even rape me. They then humiliated me by tearing my trousers down. I have been insulted, attacked and threatened on all levels because of my religion. That is the reason why I wanted to change the facilities and also for the safety of my daughter. If it continues this way, then I need to get out of here.

After Ramadan has started, we just cannot find any rest because the Muslims celebrate at night and are extremely loud. They make a noise with their tableware – sometimes until five in the morning. They smoke in front of our rooms and all the smoke comes in through the windows. We cannot sleep at night and are very tired in the mornings. Because of their celebrations, our quality of life has been extremely hampered.

[Question: "Why did you not report all of this to the police?"]

We are deemed to already fail at the hands of the interpreters and the police don't do anything any way.

[Question: "Which improvements would you make?"]

It doesn't really matter in which refugee centre we are: it is always the same with the Muslims and it will also stay that way, always. We don't want to continuously change our accommodation. If the solution is supposed to be the transfer to another facility, then it will not change our situation. The only thing we can do is what Jesus taught us to do, and that is to pray for them.

All we are asking for is more security personnel and police in the facilities and to be separated from the radical Muslims. Whoever disregards the laws should please be sent back to his home country.

We are urgently pleading for separate accommodation so that the Christians are far away from these radical Muslims who attack us, insult us and give us death threats just because of what we believe in.

In the night between 27 and 28 June 2016 there was a massive clash with Arabic housemates. [They said] Mr Rostampour and his family should not use the kitchen or the bathroom because the Muslim families were afraid of being defiled through physical contact with heathens during their Ramadan fasting. They ripped Mr Rostampour's cross off his neck and tore his T-shirt. His daughters were in the room next door, crying, and his wife was trying to mediate with tears and crying. They have been awake since 4am and are very upset and struggling tremendously. There is also another family in the facility who is confronted with the same problems.

No. 10

Our problems started in the Neckermann Centre in Frankfurt.

We are being harassed everywhere. In Frankfurt some have even committed suicide. *[After further probing the questioned was not sure if the suicides resulted due to religiously motivated hostilities.]*

When I use the washroom, the Afghan women bang the door in my face to show me how much they hate me because I do not veil myself. They spit on the floor in front of me to show their disrespect. My daughter was beaten up by the Afghan children for no reason and asked why I wouldn't veil myself. They once came to me and asked what Christians are and if they are bad, because the Afghan children mocked them for that reason.

I never reported the discrimination because I didn't want any problems and as Christians we should forgive. We are also afraid that the Afghan parents would be summoned and we would then only have problems with them outside of the facilities.

It is impossible to find any rest here because every move I make is under observation and the Afghans keep on pointing their fingers at me. They humiliate and provoke us by exposing their genitals in front of us and also in front of our children. It is a group of numerous male Afghan Muslims. They do it over and over again, whenever they see us, because we are Christians.

The reason why we don't report it is because we are afraid for our children. We are under a lot of pressure because of these fears.

When they pass me, the Muslim Afghan women in Rotenburg told me: "You changed your religion and that's why we are going to kill you."

I once wanted to call the police in the Neckermann Centre in Frankfurt. Some Arab children there were constantly pulling my daughter by her hair. They were about eight years old. I asked them why they are doing it. Besides the two German security staff, the rest were all Muslim Arabs. We then told one of the Syrian security staff because he was the only one who could speak Arabic. He then did something terrible: at lunchtime he came to us and wanted to force me to go and apologise to that strange, eight-year-old child. Otherwise he would call the police. I told him to give me a reason why I should apologise. The mother of the child then attacked me and wanted to punch me in the face. That was in March 2016.

No. 11

I received a death threat on 3 June 2016. They told me: "We are going to kill you! You are a Christian and you have left your religion." They knew I am a Christian.

I am being provoked on a regular basis as they try to start an argument. They insult my mother and my sister. I came here to live a secure life. When we try and sleep, they listen to Azan [= Muslim prayers] until four or five in the morning and won't allow us to sleep.

Before and after the arguments they say bad things about the Christian religion just to provoke us. They laugh out loud to provoke us and want to spread their religion.

We are being attacked all the time because we are Christians. They call us outcasts. Even the security staff advises the women to rather not leave the facilities alone and the men should best not go out by themselves either.

We fled to come here so that we could live in peace but that is not possible. I am very worried about my family and my younger sister. German language courses for refugees should also include the learning of the German laws. It needs to be explained that Germany will also administer punishment.

No. 12

"I also had problems in Gießen but it was not as bad there as it is here. The Muslims constantly asked me why I am not a Muslim. I shared a room with an Algerian who once read the Quran out loud for nine hours non-stop. He only did it because he knew that we are Christian. While he was reading, every now and then he would shout, "Allahu Akbar!" We thought he would be triggering a bomb any minute.

The security officer reported it to the police and they then fetched him. The worst thing was, though, that when he returned we had to share the room again.

Especially during Ramadan, I had to endure their dirty looks which put a lot of psychological pressure on me, especially when I was eating. On the first day, when we came inside and stood in the row for lunch, they gave us dirty looks and said to each other: "The Christians are coming."

The doors in the accommodation cannot be locked which is a major problem, because I don't feel safe in this hostile environment.

Last week several young Afghan men stood at the one house listening to Afghan music. As I then walked down the stairs they tried to provoke me, stared at me and made obscene sounds with their tongues. I just ignored it.

In Athens it also happened, that some Afghans mingled with us Iranians pretending to be Christians. When we then left the church, they started insulting us, calling us impure and infidels because we have changed our religion. When the Greek church realised what was happening, they brought them away from the hotel.

I am afraid to leave the facility and even more when I want to go to church. We have come to Germany because we longed for religious freedom. Our escape to Germany was tough. And now we are here in this reception centre and have the same problems we had in our home country. I don't feel safe here at all.

No. 13

"I received several death threats on 3 June 2016. At night, after that fight on 3 June 2016, I sat outside with a few friends. We wanted to talk to Esat and tell him face to face that he should stop provoking arguments. We wanted peace and apologised because of what happened that night. But Esat told me openly: "You are not a man: you have sold out your religion when you converted from Islam to Christianity." I told him that I am not here to speak about religion but to forgive and apologise for the fight. But Esat then told a friend of mine: "If I ask my Afghan friends to come and kill you, then they will do it immediately!" After we had that fight, I thought everything was now sorted out. But some

of the Afghans shouted at us saying: "We are going to tear your hearts out of your breasts because you have turned your backs on your religion. If I kill you then it is halal." I would be able to identify that man on pictures. He was very big and had huge hands.

After that argument when we were in our rooms, an Afghan woman came to me and a friend of mine. She said: "Remember, we are not in Iran any more. This is Germany and we can kill you."

[His wife confirmed the testimony and the interpreter also knows the person. The woman works in the washing room at the mashing machines.]

On the morning of 3 June 2016 I went to the washing room and confronted the Afghan woman at the washing machines. I asked her why she had said that. She then turned it around and claimed to have said the opposite, that we have to get along with each other. She gave me my washing back which was unwashed and still sopping wet.

Whenever we go to the canteen to eat, they would stare at us, bang their plates on the tables and click their tongues to demonstrate their discontent.

08.06.2016

I wanted to go to the bathroom but three Afghans sat in front and forced me to listen to a sura from the Quran. Only after they forced it upon me I was allowed to enter the bathroom. One of the men's name is Nihad but I don't know the other two names.

We never leave the house by ourselves because we feel threatened. We are always accompanied by other families.

[Question: "Why did you not report the case to the facility management or the police?"]

We did report the fact that they returned our wet clothes at the Info Point. Umar said we should just put our clothes in the tumble dryer. Faiza plays everything down we report and tells us to either come back later or that she is too busy.

[His wife added:]

Why is there not a single Iranian working in this complex? There are so many of us: we need Iranian interpreters! We are afraid and need a place where there are no Muslims.

No. 14

"A month ago I saw Afghan housemates outside of the facilities who then told me: "We are going to kill you!" They said really bad things to me and insulted Jesus. After I realised that they seemed to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, I quickly ran back to our accommodation. I realised that something was not right with them. I reported it at the Info Point but the interpreter didn't take it seriously. She called them over: we had to shake hands and she said we should be friendly to each other. That was it.

[Question: "Which improvements would you make?"]

We desperately need Persian interpreters for the German classes. I really want to learn German so that I can start working in a hospital as a nurse.

By the time I arrived on the scene on 3 June 2016, the security personnel just started separating everybody. The Afghans shouted: "You are infidels: you should be killed!"

At nine in the morning I overheard Esat speaking Dari to someone on the phone, saying: "I sent you three pictures of the Iranians. They need to be killed outside of the reception centre." I reported it at the Info Point immediately. They then called him and told us to shake hands. We Iranians always go to the police or to the Info Point and interpreters join in, but they never do anything. We tell them everything but most of the time they twist the words in our mouths and afterwards we are oppressed even more.

[Question: "Why did you not report the problems to the police?"]

I don't know why the Info Point does not forward it to the police. I guess it's because they are Afghans, but I don't know for sure. Please, you have to separate us from the Muslims. I don't know why they always want to quarrel when they see me on the premises.

No. 15

Two months ago, an English-speaking Arabic refugee demanded that I should wear a long-sleeved shirt instead of a T-shirt. He told me that it was because of his wife. I told him that outside of the premises and on the beach everybody is dressed that way. He then told me that he would kill me.

April 2016

An Afghan mother and her daughter were talking about Islam and Christians when I walked past them. They pointed to the cross I wore around my neck and asked if I am a Christian. I confirmed and she was shocked, grabbed her daughter and walked away. Up to that point nobody knew that I was a Christian.

Then two Afghans came to me and said that I and the other Iranians have sold our Islamic religion to the Germans. I said that I am not doing it for anybody but that I became a Christian four years ago in Iran. Outside of the facility, one of them told me that I am an infidel and should be killed because I converted from Islam to Christianity.

1st week in February 2016

Three or four days after I arrived here, I went shopping and didn't know anyone. The cross around my neck must have been visible accidentally. That's why other refugees mocked me in Persian, not knowing that I am also a refugee and understood what they were saying. They said: "Get out of the store!" and another showed me his knife. I have neither seen him before nor in the five months that I have been here. I think he is probably living in a flat in Rotenburg. He told me: "If you are a man, then come outside and I will kill you out there." I am not stupid

[...] He was looking for me for an hour or so but I just stayed inside the store. Once I felt safe enough, I quickly ran back to the reception centre. I didn't know anyone in the centre and didn't tell anybody either.

Regarding the incidents on 3 June 2016

I wasn't there when it began. My friends came into my room though and told me to come outside. I ran out of the house in the direction of house no. 10 close to the parking area. I saw two groups: the one with Afghans and the other with Iranians. They were insulting each other. The Afghans told them that they turned their back on their religion. The Iranians then shouted back: "It doesn't matter where you Muslims go, you just create problems. It is because of you that we have left our country because there we had no religious freedom." It was just one big cloud filled with insults.

[Question: "Which improvements would you make?"]

Because of the different languages, we need interpreters for the Iranian refugees [...] Separate accommodation is the only way of protecting us from the hostility.

24.06.2016

Mr Enayat was very tired and exhausted when he entered the administration office. Because of the nightly disturbances during Ramadan, he just couldn't sleep. In the middle of the night the whole camp comes to life: children are riding their bikes, playing ball outside, playing around and making a noise. For hours, they would be smoking their shisha pipes next to the house and all the smoke would then come in through the windows. The pounding of their tableware, loud music, people singing and praying was extremely loud. He would have had to close his windows but because of the summer heat had to keep it open. Generally he has no problem with the celebrations but those who were trying to sleep were just too troubled. The fear that they could enter the unlocked rooms at any time and carry out their death threats was ever-present. Therefore, they took turns at mounting a watch at night to warn each other in time so they could defend themselves in case they were attacked. In the morning he couldn't get up in time for breakfast: he was tired, exhausted, couldn't concentrate and was hungry. The fasting Muslims would bang their plates on the tables and express their displeasure at them for not also fasting.

No. 16

"From the first moment I came here I witnessed the way the Afghans insulted the Iranians. They said things like: "Godless infidels, it is halal if we were to spill your blood." The security staff told me to stay with the others and to not go outside by myself but it is not my problem when the Muslims have Ramadan: I am not bound to it.

There are many Afghan housemates in the house I live in, telling me what to wear. If I wear shorts, they tell me to put something else on because their families are in the house. I then always tell them that we are in Germany and not in Afghanistan and here I can wear what I want.

I want to start speaking about these problems and helping my Afghan housemates understand that here in Germany it is possible to live in peace with us Iranians.

But I also want to report some of my Afghan housemates because they are dangerous and threatened to kill us. When I am in town ie at the train station and see several Afghans, they give me dirty looks. My friends tell me to keep my mouth shut because they just want to fight.

The security staff are very good here.

Yesterday, the man who told me to change my clothes was involved in an argument that started in the queue at the cash delivery office. Someone then said: "If you Iranians were men, then go and argue with the Arabs because they are taking your women." The Afghan tried to ignite a dispute between us and the Arabs but we ignored it. That is how the argument started.

We are living together in shared accommodation where the majority are Muslims. They are persistently forcing their Islamic music on us. We don't want to listen to it: we are Christians. They get up every morning at three or four and go shouting in the whole house: "Allahu Akbar". We cannot find any peace here and don't want anything to do with that.

The bathroom and toilets are filthy. For religious reasons, they don't use our toilets. They refuse to sit on the toilets because it belongs to the infidels. My roommate is a Somali but he is very clean. The other Muslims take a bottle of water to the toilet. Because of religious reasons they don't use toilet paper. They wipe themselves with their bare hands which is disgusting and also bad for our health as they then touch everything with their dirty hands.

Just two days ago they celebrated the Fast-breaking at the end of Ramadan. Their children came out at night to play. In the middle of the night, when everybody else wants to sleep. They then played volleyball and soccer and also played in the hallways. When we asked them to please keep it down: they just shook their heads, probably because they couldn't understand us. It is just not possible to have any peace in the company of the Muslims.

[Question: "Why did you not report the incidents to the police?"]

I didn't report it because they are Afghans and I don't believe it would help. Whenever any of us go to the Info Point, the Afghans go and spread it around. For example, yesterday there was an argument but it was not reported to the police. Umar came and just sent the Afghans away. He did not even speak to the Arabs.

With every new quarrel where the police are not informed or consequences follow due to their behaviour, then it will only get worse the next time.

[Question: "Which improvements would you make?"]

Please, courses need to be initiated on the right behaviour in Germany, which rights and duties we are to adhere to, such as religious freedom. The Muslims must learn that there is such a thing called religious freedom and that not only Muslims are good people. Please separate the accommodation according to the different nationalities or better yet, in different accommodations. If that doesn't happen soon enough, then the next fight is bound to come.

No. 17

On the day I arrived I was standing at the Info Point with my suitcases waiting for a room. An Afghan then came to me. [...] He asked us if we were Muslims. I then said: "Does it make any difference?" It is because of the Muslims that we have left our countries, we want to be free and live here in peace.

On the 6 June 2016 I was reading my Bible on the lawn when five or six Afghans came and insulted me for that. They said I am an infidel and I am impure.

Around 3am they are always extremely loud and play Islamic music. Once I asked them to please turn it down but they ignored me as they just don't take me seriously.

[Question: "Which improvements would you make?"]

Please separate us from the Muslims and accommodate us in another place. We are praying for them but they don't want us around them. They even harass us outside of the camp. Even the security staff advised us to not go out alone.

We fled from Iran and the Muslims there because our lives were in danger and now we have the same problems with the Muslims here in a free country. Please send us somewhere where there are Christians. I also want to thank you and Germany.

No. 18

"I have received several death threats. On 3 June 2016, when we had that big fight, Esat said to his friends: "Let's find Iranians and kill them. They have become Christians and turned their back on our religion. We are allowed to kill them."

On 3 June 2016 I reported the threat to the police and they documented my personal details [ID card].

When they hit Jawaad, I intervened and also got punched. A few days later a

group of Afghans made fun of me and Tarek said: "If we get hold of you then we will beat you up." Since then I don't leave the premises by myself. In Gießen I had the same problems with Iranian Arabs. They insulted me because of my Christian faith. They constantly called me a kafir and mortad. One man hit me and took away my cell phone.

I then went to the police where they had an Afghan interpreter. I don't know his name any more. The case got shelved because it couldn't be proven that the offender really hit me and stole my phone. Now I have been informed, that it was not even registered that he hustled me, because of my religion.

As an Iranian man who has changed his religious affiliation and has become a Christian, I have basically been declared fair game [mortad]. I am not safe here, cannot find any rest, no peace and no support. I cannot sleep at night and after the fight I personally heard the Afghans say, they are going to use knives to kill us. That was on 3 June 2016 after the fight and after the police had gone.

Since then I don't only live in fear on the inside but also outside of the reception centre. I don't have any problems with the interpreters and security staff.

Wherever I go around here, I constantly have to endure their dirty looks and swallow their cussing and insults from all over the place, due to my and the other Iranians conversions to Christianity.

Please send us to separated accommodation. We fled from a Muslim country to find some rest but in this accommodation the Muslims are even worse than those in Iran. I cannot even go to the canteen by myself and have lunch in peace. I have received several death threats and defamation here, and now I really need your help. I cannot take it any more: please, I beg you to advance my asylum procedure. I don't care where I live: I just want to get out of here and live a safe life.

No. 19

I have received a death threat and went to the security and Info Point to report it but they didn't do anything.

That was on 7 June 2016. It was Karem who threatened me. He is persistently trying to start a fight by provoking me, saying: "I am going to kill you outside of these premises!" Many of my friends have also picked it up. Karem comes from a Taliban family: an Afghan friend of mine told me that. Karem can speak Pashtu just like the Taliban. Karem also spent three years in England and fled to Germany to escape a penalty in England.

I had a problem which I reported at the Info Point time and again. There is a man here who is always insulting our mothers and sisters. He said we are *neciz* [=impure]. His name is Yaser and hangs around with his friends, Nihad, Esat and Tarek.

The problems all started about a month ago, when they realised we were visiting a church. It started with insults such as: "You are dirty." They insulted our mothers and sisters and said: "You were born as Muslims – why have you changed your religion?" They are convinced that their religion is perfect and also say that Muslims should not change their religion. If they do, then they are *kafir*.

We want to live in peace: that is also why we don't report anything any more. As soon as we say something, the tension just inflames. As soon as we think that everything has calmed down and the problems have stopped, they get worse instead.

[Question: Which improvements would you make?]

It would be better to not have shared accommodations with Muslims, especially Afghans who can also understand our language.

I cannot find any peace and rest here. They are always watching us, which makes us very nervous. I don't even leave my room any more, because I cannot face them. Because I cannot do anything, I just stay in my room all the time and bottle it up. I came here to live a safe life but I cannot find it [...] I am so nervous, if I had to be moved to another facility and would be confronted with the same problems, then I would volunteer to return to Iran illegally. I came here to save my life. I didn't even want to participate in the survey because in reality it is a hopeless case. But for me, this is the last opportunity to find some peace.

No. 20

"On several occasions I went to the Info Point to report the death threats, in Persian, to Faiza, Umar and Mrs Müller. They didn't react. I reported it about two or three times.

I was told: "You have left your religion; you are a *kafir*. We could kill you, for that is our tradition." In the Quran it is written in *Sure 'Maedih 71-73'*, if someone leaves his religion and turns to Christianity, that he may be killed. Another *Sure*, 'Mohammad 4', states the same again: if someone leaves the Islam religion, he should be killed and beheaded.

[...] I reported it at the Info Point but they didn't say anything to them. That's why I told a friend of mine who then reported it to the police. Nothing happened. Whenever we tell the big blond woman about these things, nothing happens.

On 3 June 2016 they said that they are going to tear out our livers. It wasn't just one or two people: they all harassed us. They were Afghans. Their names are Esat, Nihad, Karem, Yaser and Tarek.

An Afghan man asked me why I was wearing shorts. We didn't report it because they won't do anything about it anyway. We don't even know if they have ever forwarded our complaints to the facility management at all.

We, Iranian men, are afraid because the Muslims in Iran wanted to kill us. That's why we fled and now we have exactly the same problems here. We would like to be in a safe environment. Please transfer us to a safe place.

Regarding 3 June 2016 between 00:30–4:00 am

We came out of our house and saw a whole lot of people that swamped Jawaad. There were about seven or eight Muslims and Jawaad was alone. We left the house to get him out of there and so we got involved in the scuffle. I don't know why they attacked him. Jawaad told us afterwards that the cross he had worn around his neck was the reason for the fight. We managed to separate them but we had to hit back because they just became more. They said they were going to tear our liver out: "You are infidels; we are going to kill you." Women were standing at the windows, encouraging the men: "They're not Muslims: they are Christians. We are not in Iran. Beat them up!"

No. 21

As a Christian, I have already been tortured in Iran. I was in prison for four years and because of the torturing I still suffer from severe headaches.

The hostilities started here about one month before that big clash occurred. First, they beat up Khalil and then Thani, who has already been moved. The Afghans wanted to use him to start a fight with us. I never had any problems with the people in the centre before. Somebody told the Afghans that all the Iranians are Christians and that they had been baptised. From that point on we had no more peace any more.

In this facility the Afghans have threatened to kill me several times. They gathered in front of my room window a day before 3 June 2016. They said: "We are going to kill you in your room during *Asan* [Prayer time before sunrise]. They said that to me a day before 3 June 2016 and also on 3 June 2016.

On 3 June 2016, I arrived on the scene only after it had started [...] I saw the Iranians and Afghans shouting.

A lot of them were arguing, I heard many insulting things about Christians. Some of the Iranians were trying to get Jawaad out of the mob. The most obnoxious things were said, they bashed our mothers and sisters but most of the insults were directed at the Christians. Even the Afghan women got up during and after the fight, standing at the windows and snubbed us Iranians. They insulted our mothers and sister until the security staff went over and closed their windows. Because of the death threats, none of us could sleep that night.

On 4 June 2016, I wanted to meet with Karem to resolve the issue: everybody here knows that. I was the one who initiated it. Mr Baader and Faiza gathered everybody so that we could be reconciled. But the very next day the Afghans tried to provoke us and tried to start a fight with Fikri and me. Karem tried to provoke us, saying he would kiss us on the mouth. He then grabbed my head but I pulled away. That is really a terrible insult: Mr Baader knows about it.

After that fight, the death threats did decline but the attacks were mainly directed at me because I was the first Christian they discovered. The church in Bebra also knows that. That is also why I left for two weeks, because I was afraid and no one protected me here. If the problems return once more, then I will leave for another few weeks or leave this facility for good. I don't know anyone personally, so it's nothing personal. These are religiously motivated altercations. They insult Jesus in my presence and they often say that I am an 'infidel' or that they will 'cut off my head'. That night they were also focusing on me. They insulted me and my family. In Dari they said: "This arsehole is a Christian!" That is also where they ripped my cross off my neck. Some friends found it on the lawn later on. It was broken and I had to have it repaired. I don't know the name of the man who said that and ripped my cross off but I had marks around my neck and it hurt badly.

[Question: "Why was the discrimination not reported to the police?"]

I reported the death threats and problems we have here many a time. But they always say that they can only react once something has happened. To me that is too late, I want to be protected if somebody wants to cut off my head. I told the big woman who is the supervisor at the Info Point and Faiza but they don't help us. All they do is talk but do nothing.

[Question: "Which improvements would you suggest?"]

Could you please make it possible for me to find another accommodation? I am the one who is being harassed the most, because I am the first one here who didn't hide his Christian faith. We need help as soon as we are being intimidated.

Please put us in a place where we can be protected, where we are not threatened or enticed to get into fight. Please separate us from the Afghan people.

No. 22

I have received several death threats when I walk around here, mostly from one Muslim group. We have reported it at the Info Point and to the security staff many times but it doesn't have any consequences. It intimidated us and made us insecure. The death threats came from Afghans who are in their twenties. It has been going on like that ever since Soraya and I came here from Fulda in May 2016.

On the night of 3 June 2016, an Afghan punched me in the face. There were no security personnel around. He insulted my family and my Christian faith. I didn't go to the medical ward because I didn't want to jeopardise my request for asylum.

They have previously provoked and insulted me time and again: they said I am impure and that I am an infidel. They slandered my Christian beliefs but I never said anything. But on that day I just had enough.

[Question: "Why were the cases not reported to the police?"]

We did report it more than once but Faiza never did anything about it. She always just said that we should be quiet and do nothing. We should keep quiet and not attract any attention. We are afraid of getting problems with our paperwork. Last week, Yussri and Thani went to the police to report the problems we have with the Muslims.

I am afraid for Soraya and my own life. I am a kick-box trainer and have also won prizes. I would like to care for myself and cannot stand living with the Muslims in this house any more. The only motivation I have, to not beat them up is the discipline I learned through my sport and my Christian faith, that expects me to forgive. She is still being harassed though, hustled and in constant distress. That puts us under immense pressure. Please, we really want an accommodation without Muslims.

[Question: "Which improvements would you suggest?"]

Please, we are asking you to find us an accommodation that is separated from the Muslims and where we are safe and are allowed to live out our faith without restraint.

We want to thank the security personnel, who protect us very well and also the two brothers from the church in Bebra whose providence and support in all matters has been beyond compare. Without their support it would have been a lot worse for us in this centre.

No. 23

I wanted to visit another Iranian in the hospital about a month ago. A few young, drunken Afghans from the centre were hiding behind a tree calling: "She is an Iranian, we can do with her whatever we want!" I am not even a Christian, I am an atheist. They shouted at me, followed me and tried to scare me. I feel intimidated, afraid and do not want to live here among the Muslims any more. I never leave my room unless my cousin comes to accompany me.

The day before yesterday, 9 June 2016, Arabic women insulted me. It was hot and so I wore a tight pants and a sleeveless shirt. They called me over next to the wall and spoke to me about the Muslim faith. After they realised that my Arabic is not very good, they left me alone.

They sometimes disturb us in the middle of the night, around 3am when they deliberately turn up their Islamic prayers on their phones or they read the Quran out loud.

I really feel extremely defenceless and I don't want Islam forced upon me. I want to keep a great distance from those things.

22 June 2016

Mrs Jafari was completely stirred up when she came looking for me in the administration office in the morning. She told me that, after she returned from

the shower, a boy of about six years knocked on her door and said that he had a message for her. She should cover her arms in the future and not walk around with sleeveless tops any more. Mrs Jafari was disturbed and confused. A week before that, Arab women confronted her and ostracised her for the sleeveless summer clothes she was wearing and now the Muslim community has sent a male to reprimand her. In the Muslim community it is generally perceived as an even bigger humiliation when you are reprimanded by someone of the opposite sex. Mrs Jafari was afraid and even more intimidated than before because now the spotlight was on her and she had to expect some sort of penalty.

At the information center, she was told that there is nothing they can do for her as long as they don't know whose child it was who knocked on her door and gave her the message. The report was not noted down and no security measures were put in place for Mrs Jafari. They also failed to forward the matter to the facility's management.

No. 24

"I never received any death threats. I did have a problem though on 3 June 2016. During that huge conflict, I intervened and tried to separate the two parties. I was actually in my room and heard the argument outside. It got worse and so I stepped in. The Afghans and the Iranians were brawling. I then also got punched a few times but, because there were so many of them, I don't know who it was. The Afghans said: "If you are real men, then let's go outside so that we can beat you to death." The Afghans shouted out: "From today the following applies: whoever finds an Iranian woman outside of the facility should rape her!"

The Afghans were the ones who started the conflict but because there are more of them they just claimed that the Iranians were the guilty ones. I told the security staff, who then came and helped and then I went back to my room.

I am a quiet person and don't like to get involved in any quarrels. But on 3 June 2016 the situation got so bad that I couldn't stay in my room: I just had to go out. When I then saw how they were striking Khalil, I had no other choice but to intervene. It really hurt me when I saw them hitting him.

We are Iranians and fled from Iran, because of the many problems we had with the Muslims. Here in the reception centre we also have a lot of problems with the Muslims. Please separate us from the Muslims.

Two days after that scuffle they chattered around, saying that they were going to attack us again. Since then I have been really worried and do not feel safe at all any more. I do feel intimidated and am begging you for help. I am very sad that they are insulting the Iranian families. We do not feel safe here.

No. 25

I received a death threat. They said: "Because you changed your religion, you are *mortad*. We are going to kill you." On the very first day we arrived, they followed us and shouted that from behind, when we walked past them. Because we went to church, they told us that we are *neciz* [= impure] and infidels. It was not a single person: they always sit together in a group.

We have these problems ever since we have arrived, because we converted from Islam to Christianity. I had different problems ie harassment and psychological stress. I have not been attacked physically but they provoke us, hoping to find a reason to start a fight. When we talk to them and try to explain why we converted, they then push us around and curse us. They tell us that we are dirty and should not touch them. One of them, Tarek is his name, is the one that hit me on 3 June 2016. He said that we are impure and *kafir*. I heard a noise and then left the house. My friend Fikri and I ran down to see why it was so loud.

I then got involved in the tussle while I was trying to split them up. Neither the police nor the Info Point helped us. A week before 3 June 2016, we went with ten other Iranians to the Info Point to notify them, that they wanted to beat us up because we are Christians. We told Mrs Müller and a Turkish interpreter translated for Yussri. She told us we can leave and that she will take care of it. But they always say that they will do something, but then they do nothing. I don't only have problems with the Afghans but also with the Arabs. When we wear shorts or sleeveless shirts, they try and force us to put other clothes on. Two weeks ago, about 120 Africans arrived here. They are now also praying in public and ganging with the Afghans and Arabs. They perform huge gatherings and they all pray together. If they want to pray, they can do it somewhere behind closed doors instead of disturbing us with it. I don't know who allowed them to do that. [Photo is included as evidence]

One of them practises the *Asan* [Islamic prayer call]. They harass us in the middle of the night, shouting in the buildings and giving orders, telling us when to bow down and when to stand up. To me it feels as if I am in Arabia, because it is impossible for us to evade all of this. They even call *Takbir* [= call to participate in prayer]. Muslims usually shout *Takbir* to either come and pray or to behead someone they are going after. When they shout that, we obviously wake up. We are afraid, because we just don't know what's going to happen next. Next to our room, there is an Arabic family who's listening to *Asan* all the time. If they want to listen to it during the day, that's fine but it should be prohibited to do it at night. Between 10pm and 6am, it feels as if we are in Arabic countries. All the children are awake, they are screaming out loud and making a noise. It is impossible to sleep. They bang their balls against our doors, sometimes even at 3am. They lock the doors so that the security staff don't realise what's going on. I reported it at the Info Point and told Umar that I don't want to listen to *Asan* but he wasn't interested.

The security staff are very good but sometimes they just don't get involved enough when it gets physical. During that big fight one of the security staff tripped as he was trying to separate two brawlers. I saw it with my own eyes, when he tripped. He then said that Ibrahim punched him. It was very foggy that night: maybe the security man thought it was so.

[Question: "Why did you not report it?"]

We cannot expect any help at the Info Point. I think it is because they don't want the reception centre to get a bad reputation.

[Question: "In your opinion, how can you be better protected?"]

The problem is inside their heads: they have this mind-set, since their childhood. That is why it is so difficult to convince them. But if there were better rules here and also sanctions whenever they do not adhere to them, then a lot of problems could be prevented. I used to be an atheist in Iran and had a lot of problems because of that. That is the reason why I fled and came here. But when I saw my Christian friends going to church and saw the peace they have inside of them, I felt something in my heart. Now I am a Christian. I now have Jesus: he loves me and I am still and relaxed. But when that big tussle started here in the centre, I thought, it doesn't really make a difference if you are an atheist in Iran or a Christian in Germany.

No. 26

"I received a death threat from an Afghan named Esat, the leader of the Afghan Muslims, in March 2016. The Iranian women confided in me, saying that Esat told them, whenever the Muslims find the Iranian women outside of the facilities, then they would rape them. I then confronted Esat on 13 June 2016 and asked him why the Afghans all take orders to attack or even kill the three Iranian men, Fikri, Kinan and Ibrahim, outside of the camp.

10.06.2016

The Afghans chased me away while I was taking a walk. They were playing ping-pong on a table tennis table. About ten of them came and wanted to beat me up. They said, "Fuck you," and that they would beat me up if they catch me outside somewhere. It has been like that ever since that conflict on 3 June 2016. I asked them why they wanted to assault me and take pictures of the three Iranian men but they just laughed.

I help keeping the compound clean and actually have a good relationship with all the refugees but that has changed since the incident on 3 June 2016. Two week ago I wanted to invite an Afghan woman to church. My Afghan house-mates saw me and said that she is a Muslim and I should leave her alone. She has already been to church with me before but was afraid to keep the contact after that. The Afghans threatened her to stay away from me and they forbid her to go to church. Because of safety reasons, I had to break off all contact with her.

There are many Afghan women who would like to go to church but they wouldn't dare to go due to the peer pressure of the Afghan community in here.

Ever since I have been here everything revolves around the conflicts between the Sunnis and the Shias. Because we used to be Shias who converted to Christianity, we Iranian converts are obviously double targets.

The Muslims constantly call me an Infidel. They smile at me when they tell me that they are still going to kill me, because I am a Christian. If they take the Quran seriously, which they do, then they will be cutting my head off. Luckily they have no such opportunities because the facility is supervised. The Afghans say that, according to Mohammed, as it is stated in the Quran, they will go to paradise if they kill infidels.

June 2016

I have told one of the security staff about the problems with the Muslims. That was before the incident on 3 June 2016. The security personnel do not think that these are religiously motivated hostilities but general, everyday problems. They advised us Iranians to not leave the Iranian women unaccompanied outside the premises.

On 11 June 2016, Esat and four other Afghans, Pakistanis and Arabs were talking about us Iranians. They said that we should be killed for converting from Islam to Christianity. Because of my cleaning work I get around quite a bit, so some of my Muslim friends told me. In the meantime the word has spread and many of the refugees from different nationalities are not pleased about it. This is not new to me though, because I have also experienced it during my time in a different country, where I was attacked by Muslims and I had to repudiate my Christian faith or else they would have killed me right there on the spot. Because of my Christian faith I have also been tortured in Iran.

March/April 2016

Because of my employment in the centre, I am confronted on a daily basis. The Muslims are constantly conversing with me and compel me to convert back to Islam. Many Afghans also say that they want to rape the Iranian women if they catch them outside of the centre. That is why the security personnel advised us to not let the women leave the premises unaccompanied.

Over and over again the Muslims insult me. Even in the shower they call me impure because I shower naked. I cannot even spend the time in the bathroom without being harassed.

[Question: "Why were these things not reported?"]

I didn't go to the police because three of my friends have already filed a complaint which only resulted in a transfer instead of a written crime report. The Afghan interpreters at the police often translate incorrectly ie Junis, who had his arm injured in Frankfurt. Jawaad was transferred close to Kassel after 3 June 2016. At the Info Point they told him that he is the one causing big problems in the reception centre. They said that he is a gang leader: at least that is how the Afghans pictured it, but that is absolutely false. He was just not willing to accept their bullying any more.

[Question: "Which improvements would you suggest?"]

All the Muslims whose words have more weight in the Muslim community than German law must understand that the German law, democracy, social and liberal morals are to be adhered to, here in Germany. Those Muslims who reject that should return to their home countries.

Maybe the Muslims and Christians should just have separate living accommodation, far away from each other. It is better if they have no contact at all because, especially after that huge conflict, the atmosphere in here is very depressing. Several Afghans slept in the Rotenburg park so that they could corner the Iranians. That's why I am pleading with you not only to separate us but also to keep us Christians at a safe distance.

30.06.2016

Mr Umar asked me: "Why did you go the women's accommodation?" They are friends of mine and I went there to have some coffee. He didn't like that. I don't know why he asked me that because it is not really any of his business and these women are my friends. The women definitely did not complain, but supposedly someone else made a complaint. I then asked who it was and he then said that several Arab women complained. We were not loud, we Iranians were sitting there, comfortably and drinking coffee. I think he only wants to impose on us his Muslim values, regarding the converging of men and women. I am a Christian and we are allowed to converse with each other.

04.07.2016/11:50 am

I received death threats from an Afghan called Karem in the presence of 20 other Afghans due to the way I spend my spare time. They all stood around me while Karem grabbed me several times forcefully by the arm. He then told the security staff that it is Ramadan and my behaviour is undignified. The security staff told him that it is normal here in Germany but he repeatedly said: "I am going to kill you," and "Fuck you."

No. 27

"On the night of 3 June 2016, I heard a group of about nine to ten Afghan men shouting in Dari, that every Afghan should use the next best opportunity to rape and kill the Iranian women they find outside of the premises. From that moment on, I was very afraid and since that day I have not left the accommodation again. I am sure the Afghan only said that because we are women. I have three other Iranian roommates. I can only sleep after we have tied up the door with shoelaces but since 3 June 2016 I cannot sleep at all. The other Iranians reported it to the police and the facility management, but to no avail. The Afghan people who observe us leaving the premises to go to church say we are infidels and, if they were to kill us, it would be *halal* [= kosher, acceptable]. They say that is what Islam prescribes.

The Afghan women called me *neciz* [= impure] numerous times because I am not a Muslim but a Christian. I overheard the Afghan women having a conversation saying that the Germans are infidels. When I walk past Afghan women,

they step aside in dismay so that they do not touch me accidentally. Since I have moved into another house, it is better but after 3 June 2016 no Iranian woman is safe in here any more. I am persistently being admonished because of my non-Muslim clothing and asked why I am wearing T-shirts and trousers. Because of the bad looks and insults, I dare not even wear my half-length dresses.

There is an interpreter named Faiza. She doesn't understand my language properly, thus I cannot communicate my questions and problems adequately. The Iranian Persian vocabulary is often completely different than Afghan Persian and leads to countless misunderstandings. Therefore, the Iranians have many difficulties and disadvantages because we cannot express ourselves satisfactorily.

[Question: "Why did you not report this to the police or the facility management""]

Well, after consulting the other Iranian housemates, Yussri went to the Info Point in the afternoon of 3 June 2016 to make a complaint. The brawl only occurred between 1 and 4 am and, because the Info Point is not occupied at night, we could only report it the next day. After this huge threat, nobody promoted the security of the Iranian women. Our fears were just not taken seriously.

[Question: "Which improvements would you suggest?"]

I support separated accommodations for Christians. Even though we are friendly, our Muslim housemates call us infidels, although the Bible tells us to be friendly and to forgive and to not force our beliefs on others.

No. 28

Weekend of 18 to 19.06.2016

Mr Aria reprimanded an Afghan resident to please not throw his rubbish next to the bin because then others will have to clean it up. Mr Aria was drinking his coffee and smoking a cigarette while he was talking to the security staff. The Afghan man then fetched reinforcement including Muslims who could speak Arabic and tried to force him to empty his cup. He was disgusted because it was Ramadan and how he could have the audacity to drink coffee and smoke in public at this time. If there had been no security personnel there in that moment, the situation could have escalated vehemently. The young man has been on 'holiday', visiting his sister in a private accommodation since then. I spoke to him and tried to encourage him to return, hoping that my report would have a positive effect. The security personnel have confirmed this incident.

Nr. 29

March 2016

An Afghan housemate came to me and asked if I am a Christian or not. I then pulled out the cross around my neck and showed it to him. Immediately he then harassed me and insulted me. He was very aggressive and without any forewarning he said, "Fuck you!" He then cussed in his native language [...] and went away. I think he must have been drunk. I never told anyone about

it: today is the first time I have spoken about it. Had I told anyone about it, it would only have created unrest and caused arguments, therefore I just kept it to myself.

[Question: "Which improvements would you suggest?"]

We need one or more integration assistants to explain the German laws to us and help us find our feet here. Most of the problems occur because of a lack of understanding.

No. 30

I have received several death threats. I visited a German class and translated for our Persian people. An Afghan named Karem then told me: "You better be careful otherwise the Tiger will come out of the jungle and kill you." I then told him that the tiger should come out now and he answered: "No, not here, but in the jungle." [...]

I once had a cross around my neck when an Afghan said to me: "Why are you wearing a cross? Persians are supposed to be Muslims." "So then you are a Shia," he said, to which I replied: "No, I am baptised and I am a Christian." The next day the Muslims all looked down on us, giving us dirty and intimidating looks.

In one situation an Afghan said all Iranians are mortad and whores. He was not even 18. I asked him what he is actually trying to say and why. I couldn't really say anything because of the dangerous situation. When I am asleep at night, they could come in my room and kill me.

Please do not tell anyone what I have told you, otherwise they will treat us even worse. If you tell them that you are a Shia, then they become friends with you, and when you tell them that you are not a Muslim, then you are no friend any more.

[Regarding the problem of incorrect translations:]

In Gießen I had an Afghan woman who translated incorrectly. I wanted to test her and said: "I would like to live alone or live with Persians or Christians. I have been baptised and therefore it is dangerous for me to live together in one room with Muslim people. I will then not be able to read my Bible, which is always dangerous because they expect us Iranians to be Muslims." She then translated saying: "He wants to live alone: what should we do?" I then immediately answered in German asking her why she translated like that? I then told the security officer myself, that I am baptised and that it is dangerous for me, which is the reason why I would like to move into another room. I then got a room for me alone and later Zohir, an Iranian Christian, accompanied me. He was baptised in Düsseldorf.

I told her not to call me "he" because I am not a dog. She got a fright and didn't expect me to speak German so well. The security man, who is also a

Christian, asked her why she didn't translate correctly. She then turned pale while the other security officer got angry and then sent her away. He then accompanied me to another man, explained everything to him and brought me in another Hall. That was between 10 and 20 May.

[Question: "Which improvements would you suggest?"]

Please allow us to move into another location or [...] separate the people within the accommodation from each other.

There are still a lot of things I could but cannot say: The Afghans crouch and stand on the toilet seats spraying their backsides off with water instead of using toilet paper. They dirty the toilets and everything else with their faeces. I have to use a huge amount of toilet paper to cover their mess or disinfect the toilet before I can use it. Because of their faith, Muslims have to use the toilet that way. They throw toilet paper in the urinals: for religious reasons they are not allowed to use urinals.

No. 31

"In Gießen I had already received several death threats. All in all it was worse in Gießen but here in Rotenburg it is more dangerous. In Gießen the people at least went outside of the facility to go and pray. It's not even a month since I have arrived here so I don't know the names yet. Here we are told that they are going to kill us if we do not pray with them. Many of the Afghans here were also in Gießen and we gave them food and cigarettes but here, since they know that we are Christians, they have changed completely. It is because of their religion: they don't have any other choice, that is just the way it is. If someone becomes a Christian, he should be killed.

I can defend myself: I can also put up a fight. In Iran, I had a 3rd Dan black belt in boxing. I could fight them any time but I came here because I want security, peace and freedom. My goal is to help my family to come over too. I am glad they are not here yet because it is too dangerous. If somebody wants to kill me because I am a Christian, then rather they kill me than my family. Here in the reception centre, someone told me: "When you go into the jungle and you're all alone, then you have to be very careful." It was an Afghan called Kareem. He threatened me and wanted to intimidate me. Kareem is one of those who are always praying outside. He is not the only problem: the majority of the Afghans are like that. We are a minority.

[Question: "Which improvements would you suggest?"]

My suggestion would be to move the Christians into separate accommodation or to put the Christians together in one house. Another option is a relocation.

No. 32

I have had several problems with aggressive people. It was Arabic and Afghan people. They pulled my clothes and asked me why I am not wearing a hijab. They fingered through my hair and asked why my hair wasn't tied

together and why I was wearing make-up. My children are exposed to all of this and are very afraid. The first week we were here there were no problems but, after they realised that I am a Christian, their behaviour towards me and my daughters changed completely. They told their own children that they are not allowed to play with my children. Some of them have already been relocated and others I recognise again but I don't know their names. My daughters are still very young and sensitive. They are not eating properly any more: they cannot sleep and do not speak much any more. They lie in their beds and don't even talk to each other any more. They say: "We don't have any friends here. The other children are always running away from us." I am divorced and my ex-husband knows that we are here. I fled because he caught me helping other Christians who needed money and a place to stay. After he found out, he stopped my business, blocked my bank account and closed down my carpet factory. He wanted to kill me and my daughters. One of my relatives is a Mullah and they planned to kill me, that is why I fled. Two months ago, just two weeks before I went to the hospital, he sent me a SMS asking me if I am enjoying my stay in Rotenburg and that he is still going to teach me a lesson. I am absolutely terrified. My daughters told me that he can locate us through my cell phone: that's why I destroyed the phone and threw the card away. I am a nervous wreck. I try to ignore all of it but my daughters can also feel the stress, which makes life very hard for them.

5 Catalogue of measures for the prevention of religious conflicts (Hesse)

Open Doors was informed about the measures listed below by the Minister of the Interior of Hesse in early October. They show the efforts of the Hesse state government to ensure the protection of religious minorities from attacks following a personal meeting between the Minister of the Interior of the state of Hesse and Markus Rode (CEO Open Doors Germany) during which the events at Rotenburg were discussed.

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

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

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

APPENDIX 1:

"Please help us!" — a letter from Rotenburg

The letter below was written by Iranian Christians living in the Rotenburg facility. It provides revealing insights into their distress before the situation was addressed by the authorities. The words were written during the time of violent attacks and death threats as a cry for help to the public.

In the name of God the merciful one

Greetings to our fellow believers, brothers and sisters in Germany, especially to those from Rotenburg.

(Jesus Christ says 'my family is the church', and therefore you are also our family.)

We, the Iranian refugees based in the city of Rotenburg, have fled from the Islamic Republic of Iran because we have been accused of being Christians and therefore have repeatedly been threatened by torture, imprisonment and the death penalty by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Here, where we have been accommodated presently, we are exposed to the same kinds of threats as before, this time at the hand of Afghan Muslims, and we fear for our lives.

The Afghan refugees are acting in accordance with the Koran and its provisions, which read in sura Mohamed, verse (Ayeh) four: 'If you meet infidels, chop off their heads and take them captive or take their positions (as bounty) and let them go.' By heeding this and other similar verses from the Koran, which is their religious book, they consider this kind of behaviour as their Sharia duty and as their Jihad in the way of Islam.

They call us Iranian Christians apostates and infidels because of our decision to leave Islam and consider the shedding of our blood as legitimate. (Or even necessary)

The Muslim Afghans, who by far outnumber us, have beaten us repeatedly. The corresponding documents are kept at the Rotenburg police station. They have threatened to kill us which we have made known to those in charge at the camp and at the police station, but unfortunately no serious measures were taken. Therefore we are very much afraid.

We are asking you, our fellow citizens, desperately for help. You, who engage yourselves in the protection of pets, please also engage yourselves on our behalf. We are suffering these threats and difficulties because of our faith.

In the hope for the day when throughout the world no one will be suppressed because of their faith.

Thank you very much, your Iranian Christians

APPENDIX 2:

Demands for the protection of Christian refugees in Germany

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

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

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

About Open Doors

SERVING PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS WORLDWIDE

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

DEDICATED HELP IN ABOUT 60 COUNTRIES: COUNTERING HATRED AND VIOLENCE

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

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

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