



„ALLE MENSCHEN SIND FREI UND GLEICH AN WÜRDE UND RECHTEN GEBOREN.“

ALLGEMEINE ERKLÄRUNG DER MENSCHENRECHTE, ART. 1

Leider fühlt sich das in der Realität nicht immer so an. Von blöden Sprüchen, über schlechte Behandlung bis hin zu körperlichen Übergriffen – diese Formen von Gewalt können nicht nur von Mitschüler_innen ausgeübt werden, sondern leider auch von Lehrer_innen und Direktor_innen. Wenn man von Schüler_innen gemobbt wird, gibt es Stellen, an die man sich wenden kann... doch was passiert, wenn es von Lehrer_innen selbst ausgeht? Kann man sich dagegen wehren? Gibt es jemanden, den das überhaupt interessiert?

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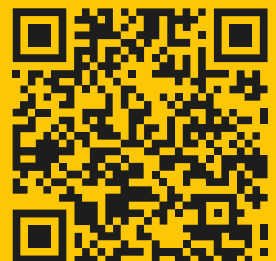


Melde Rassismus und Hass im Netz an ZARA

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und auf Wunsch **anonym**
Beraten zu werden



Zur Website





LANGUAGE USE

Racist language use is largely paraphrased. In the case presentations for analysis purposes, a trigger warning is provided.

In this report, we have deliberately refrained from using certain racist words in full length. In such cases, the offensive word was clearly abbreviated, and the addition „-word“ was used. It is the absolute priority of the documentation team to practice mindfulness in the linking of theory and practice and to work in a trauma-informed way as much as possible.

BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour. The term is not a biologicistic/phenotypical categorisation, but a self-designation referring to the fact that people are bound together by common experiences of racism and are perceived in a certain way by society.

Black as a self-designation „refers to people’s experiences of racism“⁽¹⁾ and is thus a socio-political positioning in a majority white-dominated social structure. The capital letter „B“ is considered a symbol of an emancipatory practice of resistance.

The term ‚white‘ describes neither a real skin colour nor phenotypical/biological characteristics of a person, but a dominant and privileged position within a racist system of power. „Whiteness is an identity concept that remains mostly unspoken and unnamed because it is considered the norm and the centre of perspectives.“⁽²⁾

To continue a process towards barrier-free access, which we will expand in the coming years, we are reducing italics and applying font size 12 in long sections.

If you have any questions, concerns and/or feedback, please contact us at: office@dokustelle.at

(1) Tupoka, Ogette (2019). exit racism. Rassismuskritisch denken lernen. Münster: Unrast.

(2) Moka, Madeleina (2019). Warum wir sprachliche Veränderung brauchen und Political Correctness trotzdem problematisch ist. <https://rosa-mag.de/warum-wir-sprachliche-veraenderung-brauchen-und-political-correctness-trotz-dem-problematisch-ist/> (accessed 3.5.2024).

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Your donation for anti-racism work

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IBAN: AT12 2011 1840 1418 4700 BIC: GIBAATWWXXX



Resistance

————— Munira Mohamud —————

You wonder how the painful tears in our eyes become rainbows
How their hatred and darkness never meet our being
We answer with a smile, and they understand
That the light of our souls makes colors out of the rain of their hearts

—————

IMPRINT

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EDITORIAL

//////// The eighth Anti-Muslim Racism Report is not only a look back at nine years of awareness raising and nine years of documentation work, but also nine years of consistency and nine years of support services for systematically disadvantaged individuals and groups in society. The important pillars of our work therefore continue to be essential empowerment work aimed at society at large, know-your-rights trainings and self-empowerment, as well as individual counselling.

For this reason, three contributions in this year's report are dedicated to these areas. Special thanks go to our two counsellors, Ümmü Selime Türe and Dunia Khalil, who reflect on their many years of expertise in counselling practice for us.

On the one hand, their contributions highlight the impact of anti-Muslim racism on psychological well-being and thus the need for psychosocial counselling. On the other hand, they shed light on power relations that make equal rights difficult for those affected by racism and show how legal action can be taken using the example of racist police violence.

In 2022, the Dokustelle Austria set a special focus on reaching out to and involving marginalised and systematically disadvantaged people and social groups. The Dokustelle Austria was not only concerned with countering anti-Muslim racism in a general sense, but also with identifying other disadvantages and addressing them in the counselling context. In line with this intersectional approach, the outreach team of Dokustelle Austria diversified its networking strategy by entering further cooperation and alliances. These measures and strategies were illustrated in a contribution by our project coordinator Sedra Arab.

From this perspective, 2022 also symbolises a year in which the team grew closer together and was able to move into a new office in the

third district of Vienna. From this created space, the Dokustelle Austria continuously develops structures and projects that contribute to a society that is critical of racism and more just, and that can reach affected communities in a targeted way. Without funded structures, sustainable project development is hardly possible.

The work of the Dokustelle Austria takes place in a context that is characterised by relations of dominance and power that (re)produce and perpetuate exclusion mechanisms. For a profound understanding of racist discourses about Muslims in Austria, it is also necessary to take a close look at global events. It should be noted that there is not only an increase in anti-Muslim racism, but also a general hostile defensive attitude towards people who are excluded from the constructed ‚we‘ and defined as ‚foreign‘ or not belonging (othering). Such a defensive attitude has found expression far beyond the borders of Austria, not only in right-wing extremist circles, but also in the broad mass of the population, and is a decisive factor in national and EU-wide legislation.

This year's focus deals with the formative role played by the production of knowledge about Muslims and the discursively associated so-called ‚political Islam‘, as well as the Dokustelle Austria team's discomfort with this term. Therefore, we were particularly pleased to interview the political scientist Schirin Amir-Moazami in this context.

In 2022, the Dokustelle Austria recorded 1324 racist attacks against Muslims and people perceived as Muslim in Austria. This number only represents a small number of incidents and quantitatively illuminates only a fraction of what those affected experience in everyday life. In the chapter Anti-Muslim Racism in Austria, the recorded cases are presented quantitatively and analytically examined in more detail. A distinction is made between online and offline cases. It is clearly recognisable how much - through increasing digitalisation of every-

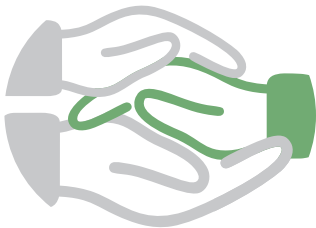
day life - interactions are shifting to the digital sphere. The phenomenon is recorded more concretely through targeted media monitoring.

Since this report would not be possible without the impressive commitment of volunteers, network partners and supporters of the Dokustelle Austria, we would like to take this opportunity to thank them and end this editorial with the words of the well-known Viennese song : „You have privilege, but we have got our friends!“⁽¹⁾

(1) EsraP & Gasmac Gilmore. 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iepLd96_MDU. (Accessed 5/4/2023)

AREAS OF WORK

The team of the Documentation and Counselling Centre Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Racism has expanded and specified its areas of responsibility over the last eight years to work more effectively and sustainably.



ASSISTANCE

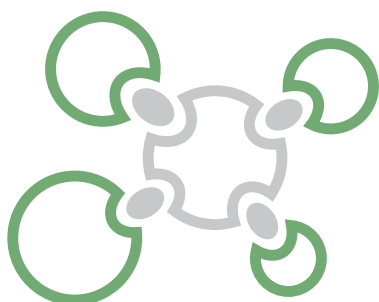
If a person who has been directly affected by an anti-Muslim racism calls us, we can offer support to the person affected and help them take further steps. The initial conversation and collective processing strengthen the person affected and can give them the feeling that they are not alone. This is first an initial discussion about the incident and then further...

If a directly affected person contacts us by phone, email, online form, or social media because they have specific questions about an experience or situation, we give them practical advice. If it is necessary to...



CONSULTING

We pass them on to established as well as specialised non-governmental and governmental institutions, contact points and organisations.



MEDIATE

In our documentation work, we record cases of anti-Muslim racism online and offline. We not only document cases brought to our attention but also carry out active monitoring work that provides the base for our statistics and analysis. With the work of the Documentation and Counselling Centre, we do not only want to record figures and show statistics but also work in a targeted preventive way against group-related misanthropy and division. That is why...



DOCUMENTATION & MONITORING



EDUCATIONAL WORK AND RAISING AWARENESS

are particularly important. With our trainings and workshops, we sensitise people directly affected by anti-Muslim racism as well as those not affected. In doing so, we show that anti-Muslim racism must be considered in society as a whole. With our documentation and empowerment work, we aim to raise awareness to prevent Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in society. Another area where we continuously do empowerment work is on digital platforms. In addition to our website, we use social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to draw attention to current events and to keep the community informed about our work.

Cooperation and exchange with various national, European, and international associations, civil organisations, initiatives, institutions, and educational institutions are another important area of activity of the Dokustelle Austria.



COOPERATION

Closed team meeting



Protest speech



„War is war, a human is a human“ - International Day Against Racism

📍Karlsplatz

Press conference



Anti-Muslim Racism Report 2021

📍Brunnenpassage

Online workshop

Online-Workshop:

„Strategien gegen Rassismus an der Hochschule“

für Studierende der FH Campus und Uni Wien

mit Munira Mohamud und dem Referat für antirassistische Arbeit und ausländische Studierende

23. Februar, 18 Uhr
Link in Bio & Post



Strategies against racism at the University (participation)

📍Online

Dokustelle Iftar



Kick-Off for the new office
📍Vienna

Workshop PROSA

Introduction to anti-Muslim racism and strategies for action

📍Vienna

23
02

4-6
03

18
03

24
04

02
06

23
06

02
24



Online video message

Words for Friday with IGGÖ – International Day Against Racism

📍Online

Colonial continuities with Kontexte Netzwerk

05
31



Panel discussion

📍Vienna (Die Requisite)

📍Vienna
„Für alle, die hier sind“

06
29



Book presentation and discussion

Black Lives Still Matter

📍Karlsplatz

06
18

gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.gv.at

Antimuslimischer Rassismus exposed – Das Phänomen und seine Struktur

Online-Workshop
Donnerstag, 24.02.2022
15:00 Uhr Link in Bio

In Kooperation mit der
DOKUSTELLE
Mehrkulturelle & antirassistische Initiative

Online event

Anti-Muslim racism exposed – The phenomenon and its structure

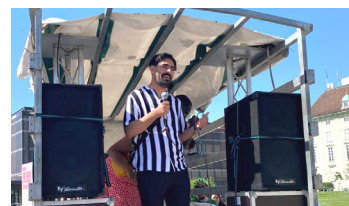
📍Online

Round table

with Muslim civil society organisations and the Minister of Justice
📍Vienna



Protest speech



Here, the Dokustelle Austria offers a brief insight into its public relations work. This list is a small selection and does not claim to be complete

„Schnittpunkt Afrika“ with focus on racism and decolonisation - with posters, photos and illustrations by Dokustelle Austria

Vienna
Department of African Studies

Exhibition opening



Meeting



with Mireille Ngosso

Panel discussion



Event for the International Human Rights Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
Presentation of the Dokustelle and raising awareness for anti-Muslim racism

Vienna Islamic Centre

Panel discussion



Awareness week „Refugees Welcome“ by IGGÖ
Film presentation Mediterranea with panel discussion
Vienna

Meeting



with Alma Zadić
Vienna

Digital meeting

Educational project open mind – transnational and community-wide against Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hostility
Transnational digital conference: „Anti-Muslim Racism in Europe: Social Impacts and Civic Engagement“
Online

Salto Youth on antiracism in Austria
Department of African Studies

This human world Festival ZARA
Vienna

Empowerment-workshop anti-Muslim racism & Know Your Rights
St. Pölten

Study visit and exchange by OEAD:



Roundtable

Ways of acting against structural racism: What are demands on art and the art universities?

Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

Advisory committee on the framework convention for the protection of national minorities
Vienna Intercity Hotel

Panel discussion



Operation Luxor
Vienna

Community workshop



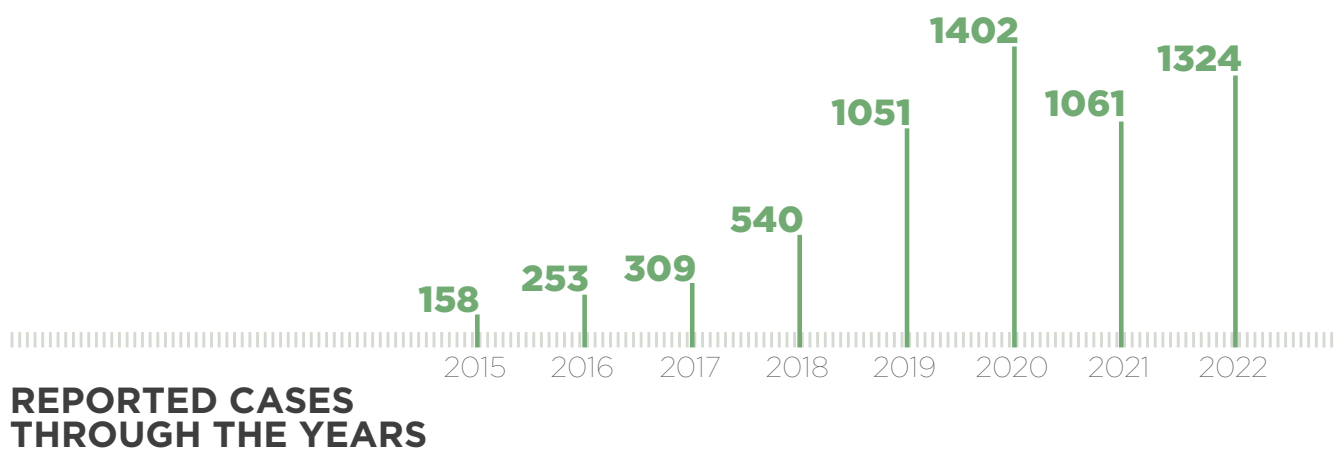
Meeting



Film and panel discussion



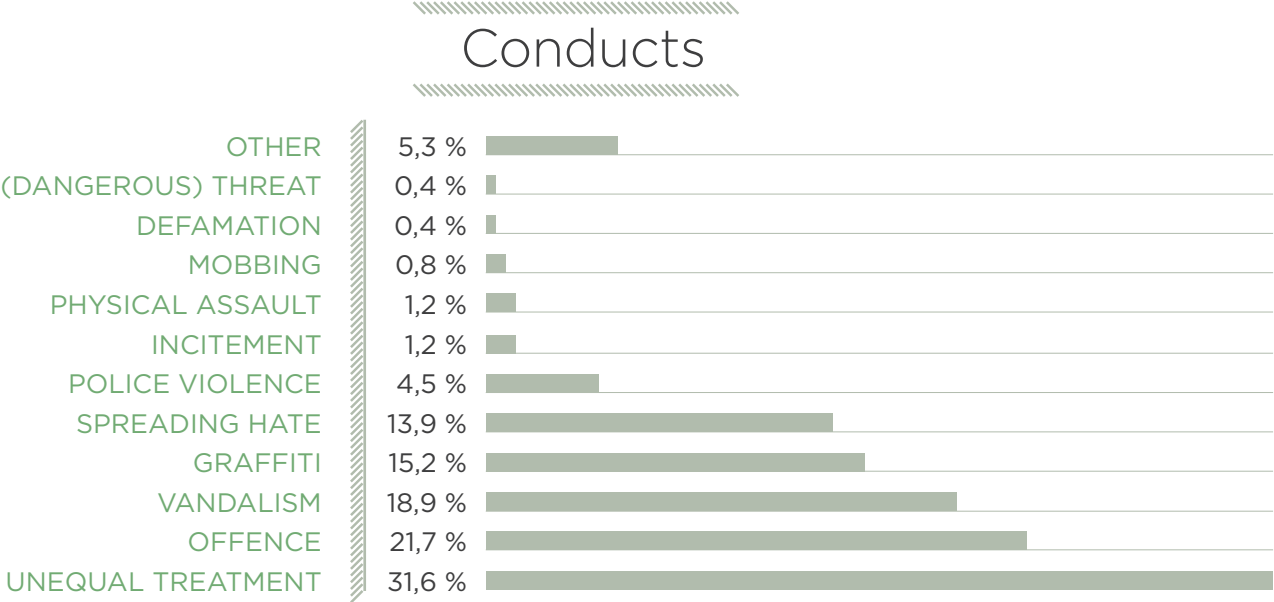
ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM IN AUSTRIA



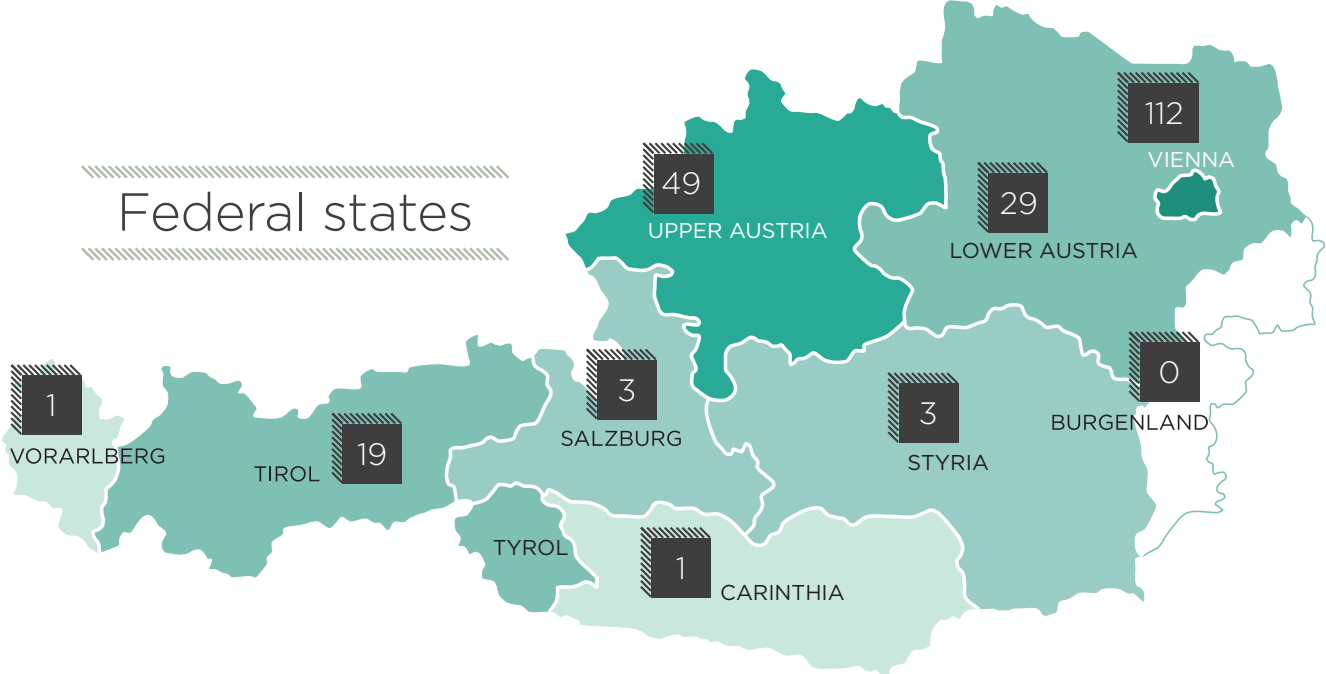
REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2022

In 2022, the Dokustelle Austria recorded 1324 racist attacks against Muslims and persons perceived as Muslim. These cases consisting of offline cases and online cases reported by the monitoring team. It is important to mention that our yearly statistics only presented a snapshot of actual cases and can only help to highlight trends in Austria. The number of actual assaults is much higher. However, as every case is one too many, we support our data analysis with detailed case descriptions and possibilities for action based on an intersectional understanding of structural racism. We would like to especially thank the Initiative for a Discrimination-Free Education (IDB), the association Civil Courage & Anti-Racism Work (ZARA) and the Ombud for Equal Treatment in Austria (GAW) for forwarding us their case numbers 2022 with reference to anti-Muslim racism in Austria.

Public spaces also represent places where racist attacks like vandalism, graffiti and spreading of hate are taking place. In 2022, the Dokustelle Austria also documents increasing racist police violence. Many of the racist acts, originating from the police, concern the unlawful issuing of violations of ordinances. Very often, victims report that police officers display their professional inviolability by means of humiliating and oppressive exercises of power.

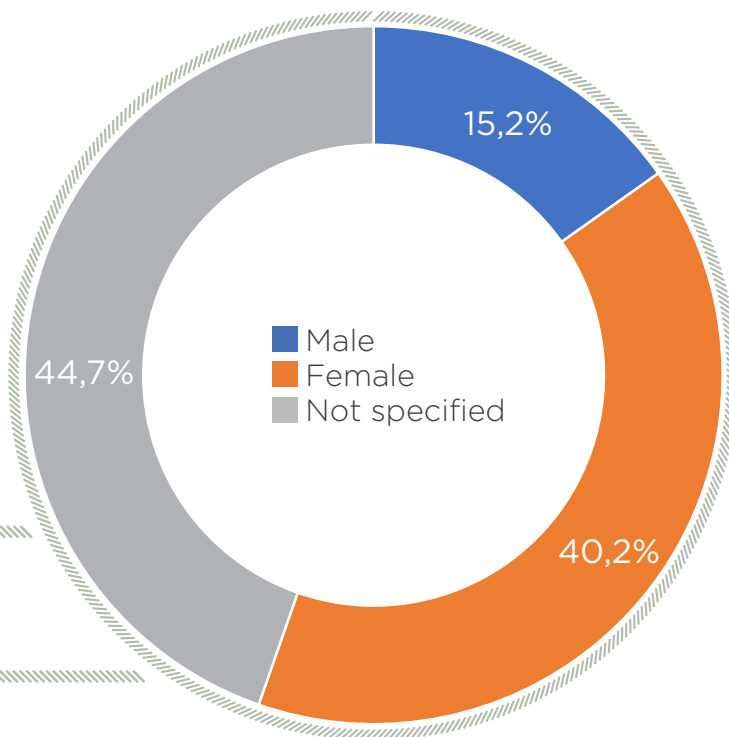


The increasing number of cases reported from federal states all over Austria reflect the intensified networking and outreach work of the Dokustelle Austria in 2022. This work will be continuously expanded in the following years.



Out of a total of 135 reported offline cases, 98 affected persons define themselves as women and 37 as men. The findings of previous years show that women are more affected by structural violence within patriarchal structures and male-dominant power relations in Austria. Therefore, we cannot consider anti-Muslim racism separately from intersectional patterns of violence.

Gender of affected persons



In 2022, the Dokustelle Austria carried out an intensified online monitoring to highlight the number of racist online statements against Muslims. We recorded 1080 incidents of anti-Muslim racism on the internet.

Conducts (online)



Most of the statements are classified under the category of spreading hate with more than 92%, and more than 5% are categorized under incitement to hatred. As in the previous year, a particular correlation could be observed between political events and verbal violence on the internet.

The beginning of the year started with the side letter between the coalition parties ÖVP and the Green Party that was leaked to the media. The resulting discussion on the headscarf ban for teachers triggered a flood of hate comments specifically against Muslim women. Here, the structural anchoring of anti-Muslim racism or the attempt to consolidate it by political actors in the education sector became public without major consequences.

In 2022, the Dokustelle Austria also monitored ongoing media coverage of the failed “Operation Luxor” with multiple articles reporting on biased experts, high costs for taxpayers, dismissal of cases against defendants and lack of resources for further investigations through translators from Arabic to German. In addition, as in the previous year, the monitoring team documented an increasing trend of violent speech in the context of state surveillance of Muslim communities and individuals. Hate comments in this context call for more control of a supposedly homogeneous religious group that endangers democracy in Austria and wants to ‘take over the state’. Almost two years after the illegal raids in the context of „Operation Luxor“, a systematic analysis of online comments shows

that the approval of the restriction of the religious freedom of Muslims as well as the (terror) suspicion of this group (which can be activated at any time) still triggers little indignation in society.

In this context, the term ‚Political Islam‘ is not only used inflationary in public media but is also reflected in anti-Muslim hate comments. Significantly, these comments often center physical space that are supposedly occupied and taken over by Muslims. These narratives lead to an imagined redistribution of dominance that re-locates power to one part of a supposedly dangerous strata of society.

Sometimes the sheer appearance of visible Muslims in public spaces (schools, playgrounds, shopping streets, etc.) is portrayed as aggressive. In this context, anti-Muslim comments target the appearance of groups of visible Muslims or through the urge to protect woman (from wearing the head scarf) or youth (from being radicalized). However, most users express violent thoughts within their narrative and comments in online media channels and social media.

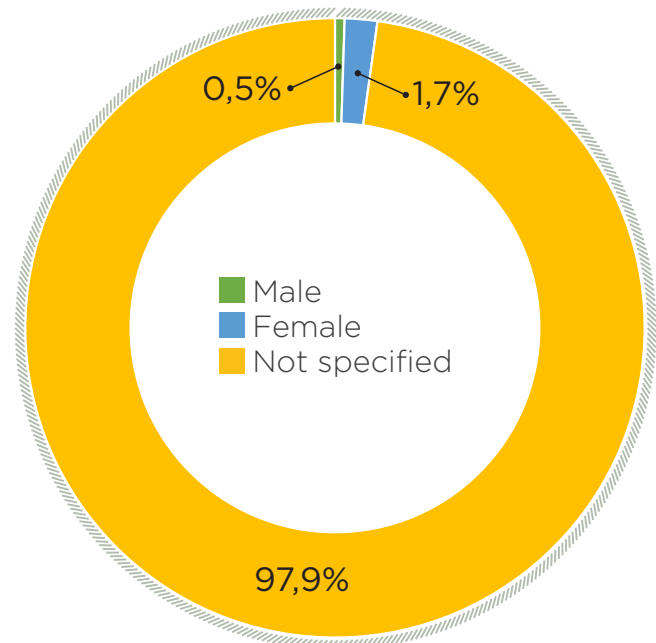
2022 also marked the beginning of the international war in Ukraine and thus a drastic increase in hate speech against refugees classified as Muslim documented by the Dokustelle Austria. Especially the narratives spread by political actors about ‚refugees from Ukraine being closer to the West‘ and therefore ‚easier to be integrated in Austrian society‘ were adopted in racist online comments.

Xenophobia was reflected in the form of the constructed fear of the ‚Other‘ non-White refugees and people on the move. A prominent case that was featured in social media forums of the Vienna based youth group of the right Freedom Party (FPÖ) was a post in October 2022 that stated

„Population change through hedonism: what Emily aborts, Aischa gives birth to!“⁽¹⁾

Spreading such narratives is classified as incitement of hate against a specific group of Austrian society by the Dokustelle Austria and followed up with great concern.

This year, the evaluations of the affected person category gender are striking. In over a thousand cases (98%), no clearly definable or self-identified gender categories were mentioned. On the contrary, most of the hate comments were directed against the entire group of Muslims and persons perceived as Muslim.



Gender of affected persons (online)

This confirms the trend in anti-Muslim racist hate speech, which contribute to a collective devaluation and a clear dividing line between ‚Austrians‘ and ‚foreigners or Muslims‘.

(1) SOS Mitmensch. 2023. Anti-Muslim Racism in Austrian Politics. 2023, 99.



Trigger warning: The case presented contains racist, therefore violent/ offensive/ degrading content that some readers may find painful. We ask you to read the case on your own responsibility and consciously in relation to your own well-being.



Online-Monitoring

The team of Dokustelle Austria analyses social media platforms as well as comment forums of various online newspapers in Austria. The documentation is limited to incidents that are publicly accessible and retrievable in Austria. The documented cases include both criminally relevant content such as insults, spreading hate or incitement, as well as legally 'compliant' statements that can clearly be classified as violent. It is important to emphasise that the Dokustelle Austria thrives beyond the legal framework to identify a variety of forms of anti-Muslim racism on the internet.

Therefore, the documented cases include, among others, derogatory terminology, stereotypes and prejudices, glorification of violence and trivialisation of crimes, acts of violence and harm done (both psychological and physical). The documented information includes the act, the time of the posting, the gender of the perpetrator and the person concerned, who the posting was directed against (group of people, individual, organisation, etc.) and a screenshot of the post.

In this context, it is important to note that online hate has become a growing problem in recent years. The effects can be serious, regardless of criminal relevance, and can have a decisive impact on the well-being, quality of life and sense of belonging of Muslims. It is therefore essential to develop an awareness of this and to counteract the attempt to normalise anti-Muslim racism, which not only makes itself felt in public discourse, but is also reflected by users on the internet.

CASES

AND POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION

This chapter includes selected examples of documented cases in the areas of physical assault, insult, spreading hate, incitement, unequal treatment, damage to property, threats, cyber bullying and defamation. In addition, we show concrete possibilities for action.



Trigger warning

A critical engagement with the presentation of documented cases is essential to counteract the reproduction of problematic content, questionable narratives and offensive statements. However, it is challenging to find a pathway between presenting cases for critical engagement and/ or reproducing racist narratives. Using the cases for analysis is an essential process to uncover anti-Muslim racist discourses, dissect questionable narratives and point out disturbing trends. Considering the reasonableness of the cases presented, the team of the documentary unit decided

to unidentify offensive messages without added value and to depict those cases in need of analysis with concrete wording. Cases with particularly serious content that may prompt the reproduction of anti-Muslim narratives are marked as such and it is pointed out to look at them critically.

PHYSICAL ASSAULT



Ms. J. (in her early 30s), who wears a headscarf, is leaving the supermarket branch Billa when an older woman directly targets her, suddenly attacks her with a shopping trolley and pushes it against her. Ms. J. shouts at the woman and reprimands her, while a witness shows moral courage and stands by her. The witness advises Ms. J. to call the police. One of the supermarket employees also witnesses the incident and say that this is not an isolated case, and that the elderly person often attacks people. As Ms. J. is on her way to pick up her children from school at the time of the assault and does not want to be late, she refrains from calling the police.



POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION

(Physical assault)

In the case of physical assault, a distinction must be made between several offences. Bodily injury according to section 83 of the Criminal Code (StGB) takes place when a person is (visibly) injured in the body or damaged in health. If the bodily injury results in damage to health or occupational disability lasting longer than 24 days, or if the injury itself is severe, Section 84 of the Criminal Code applies, and the injury is thus to be qualified as severe bodily injury.

The offences must be reported to the police (at any police station). It is strongly recommended to get a report confirmation. If there is no bodily harm, such a physical assault can be qualified as an insult (e.g. a slap in the face) – see insult.

After a report has been made to Dokustelle Austria, staff members can document the incident, actively support it and assist in contacts with the authorities.



The case presented contains racist, therefore violent/ offensive/ degrading content that some readers may find painful. We ask you to read the case on your own responsibility and consciously in relation to your own well-being.

UNEQUAL TREATMENT



In September 2022, a family with valid train tickets travels on a RegioJet train from Vienna to Budapest. When they start their journey and board the train, the conductor in charge treats them rudely. The conductor becomes loud and threatens the family to throw them off the train at the next opportunity. The father of the family concerned tells the conductor to stop his behavior and statements, whereupon the conductor calls the police, claiming that the person concerned had threatened him. Later, when the police arrive, the family and their children must get off the train. The police stop the police action and leave the situation.

Because of this incident, the family must buy new train tickets, which are a lot more expensive than the ones they originally booked legitimately. In addition, they spend several hours trying to find out how to continue their journey. Until after midnight, they must deal with the problems caused by the conductor to get to their desired place of arrival. The family concerned is still particularly upset about the statement „This is Austria“ made by the conductor during the incident. The tickets have not been refunded at the time of publication of this report.



POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION

(Unequal treatment)

The Equal Treatment Act prohibits discrimination in access to goods and services based on gender and ethnicity. Affected persons have the possibility to initiate proceedings free of charge before an Equal Treatment Commission. Here it is established in writing whether discrimination has taken place. This can be used as additional evidence in court. If discrimination is found from a structural legal point of view, the commission can propose compensation for damages to the person concerned.

Affected persons also have the option of going to the civil court afterwards. However, it should be noted that such proceedings are associated with a cost risk. The Dokustelle Austria is a member of the Litigation Association, which can assume such a cost risk under certain circumstances. This is subject to an examination of the individual case.

After a report to the Dokustelle Austria, staff members can document the incident and actively accompany and mediate it.

OFFENCE



When Ms. D. gets off the bus on her way to go shopping, a man approaches her who first looks at her and then shakes his head. He then comes closer, spits at her and begins to call her racist and sexist names. Racist insults such as „terrorist bitch“, „terrorist slut“, „Muslim pack“ and „fucking N-word“ were used. Afterwards, he leaves the situation without further ado.



The case presented contains racist, therefore violent/ offensive/ degrading content that some readers may find painful. We ask you to read the case on your own responsibility and consciously in relation to your own well-being.



POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION

(Offence)

According to section 115 of the Criminal Code, it is a criminal offence to insult, ridicule, physically abuse or threaten to physically abuse another person in public or in front of several people (at least three). Physical abuse in this sense would be, for example, a slap in the face, spitting on someone or pulling off a headscarf.

Important: If it is a racist insult, the police are responsible according to § 117 3 (StGB). Accordingly, the person concerned has the right to report the insult to the police in terms of criminal law. Such a report does not involve any costs. Attention: Often police officers do not know that they are responsible for this due to § 117 para 3 – „entitlement to charge“!

After a report to the documentation centre, a staff member can document the case and accompany the further process on different levels.

SPREADING HATE



On the morning of 9 August 2022, a notice is found on the information board in front of a mosque with deeply frightening, inhuman and offensive messages as well as images of brutal human torture. As this is the largest Muslim place of worship in Austria, it can be assumed that these messages were deliberately posted. The responsible authorities were informed by the director of the Mosque about the incident. The notice can be analysed as on a threat to Muslims and on the other hand a message to society at large to perceive Muslims as a threat.



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A person who passes by says: „Austrians wouldn't break the lift, only foreigners do that“.



Youth section of the Austrian Freedom Party posts: „What Emily aborts, Aischa gives birth to“.



POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION

(Spreading hate)

Victims or witnesses can forward the incident to Dokustelle Austria for documentation, whereby these cases are included in the statistics. In addition, the Dokustelle Austria and individuals can apply for removal of posts at social media platforms.

INCITEMENT



In the tram, several migrants speak Turkish among themselves. After some time, two people get on the tram and start complaining, at first among themselves, that the people are „not integrated“ because they do not speak German. They start to get louder and louder and threaten the persons concerned by making violent and Holocaust-glorifying statements. Among other things, they utter sentences like: „Hitler forgot to gas them“. The woman shouts louder and louder, whereupon a few people interfere. This makes her even more aggressive. Finally, she got physical and broke a pane of glass. The only consequence reported to the Dokustelle Austria is that the person is thrown off the tram.



Online comment: I waterboard you filthy Muslim with your fucking prayer rug and pig's blood“.



POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION

(Incitement)

Incitement to hatred involves inciting hatred against certain groups of people or against an individual because of the attributed membership of that group. The following acts are covered: Inciting to violence, inciting to hatred or an insult that is suitable to make this group contemptible or disparage it in public opinion. In principle, such comments can be reported to the police within one year if they are publicly accessible (visible to 30 or 150 people depending on the offence). It is also possible to send (online) comments glorifying or inciting National Socialism to the NS Reporting Office at the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (ns-meldestelle@bvt.gv.at).

Victims or witnesses can forward the incident to the Dokustelle Austria, which will include these cases in the case statistics. Dokustelle Austria staff can monitor the progress of the case and, if necessary, request the removal of an online comment.



The case presented contains racist, therefore violent/ offensive/ degrading content that some readers may find painful. We ask you to read the case on your own responsibility and consciously in relation to your own well-being.



Let's stand strong against anti-Muslim racism!
Report your cases!

DOKUSTELLE

Islamfeindlichkeit & antimuslimischer Rassismus



Your donation for anti-racism work
Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle rassistischer Angriffe
IBAN: AT12 2011 1840 1418 4700 BIC: GIBAATWWXXX



PROPERTY DAMAGE/ VANDALISM



In summer, various graffiti become visible in the Linz cityscape that repeatedly bear one and the same handwriting. They reproduce homophobic, right-wing extremist and anti-Muslim racist content. One day, 200 metres away from two mosques, next to tram tracks, large letters appear stating: „Allah is Satan“. Gradually more graffiti appears that can be attributed to the same style. Among other things, writings like „God doesn't want you to kill Muslim“ or „Islam, Homo, Jesus“ can be seen on walls, concrete blocks, and electricity boxes.



© PRIVATE



On New Year's Day, there was a fire at the entrance door of a Viennese mosque in Ottakring. Since then, the office for the Protection of the Constitution has been investigating. President of the faith community Ümit Vural tweeted: „Unfortunately, the year begins with sad news. Our mosque in Vienna-Ottakring was the victim of an act of vandalism“. No one was physically harmed.



© PRIVATE



POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION

(Property damage/ vandalism)

Damage to property is an official offence that police officers must report if they see it themselves. However, this often does not happen. What can be done? You can file a complaint yourself (also anonymously and against unknown persons).

After a report to the Dokustelle, the case is included in the statistics. In addition, staff members of the Dokustelle Austria can inform the responsible authorities (e.g. city services, public transport companies or the responsible property management) and apply for removal.

In this specific case in Linz, the „Schau auf Linz“ portal was informed to act against the graffiti. Since many of the graffiti were on electricity boxes, Linz AG was made aware of the racist graffiti. They reacted and removed the graffiti one to two months later.

RACIST POLICE VIOLENCE



A man receives a pizza that he did not order and consumes it without paying for it. When confronted by the delivery man, he says that he can pick the leftovers out of the rubbish himself. He brings the rubbish bin to his door and the delivery man starts looking for leftovers to prove that food was delivered to this address. As he bends down to look, the man slams the door in his face, causing the delivery man's nose to start bleeding. As the delivery man is about to continue his work after a series of verbal discussions, he receives a call from his brother at the restaurant. He is informed that the police had visited the restaurant and told him that four charges (dangerous threat, trespassing, damage to property and assault) had been filed against the supplier. During their visit to the restaurant, the police also take a closer look at the restaurant. During the search, a police officer violently pushes the supplier's father aside to go into the kitchen and take photos. Afterwards he threatens that the health department will pay them a visit, as one is certainly not allowed to run a restaurant like that. The restaurant has only existed for a few months at this point.

When the supplier goes to the police station to find out what happened and what charges have been brought against him, the police officers treat him racist and say that „he has nothing to say here“. They insult him and say that „if he doesn't like it here, he can go back to his country“. When he tries to raise his objection, the police officers make statements like: „Shut the fuck up!“ and „You have nothing to say here!“



POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION

(Racist police violence)

Police officers must adhere to the so-called Guidelines Ordinance, a kind of 'code of conduct' for police officers, during an official act. They are not allowed to give the impression of bias and treat people differently based on gender, colour of skin, national or ethnic origin, religious beliefs, etc. during official acts. If the impression arises, or if it is observed and recognised, that an official act is based on discrimination and/or is discriminatory, a complaint can be lodged against it within six weeks. There are two ways to lodge a complaint: Directive and measure complaints. In addition, appeals can be lodged against penal decisions.

After a report has been made to the Dokustelle Austria, staff members can document it and accompany the further course of the case at various levels and pass it on.



The case presented contains racist, therefore violent/ offensive/ degrading content that some readers may find painful. We ask you to read the case on your own responsibility and consciously in relation to your own well-being.

ONLINE-MONITORING



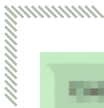
vor 11 Monaten

Für den Fall, dass Ukrainer flüchten müssen ist die Region zur Unterstützung bereit um Zivilisten vorübergehend Schutz zu bieten - das ist ja klar. Im Gegensatz zu den Migranten aus aller Islamisten Länder die seit vielen Jahren in Europa eindringen wären wir hier tatsächlich gefragt. Da wir hier die Verantwortung leben ist es aber gleichzeitig notwendig diejenigen die ich hier oben erwähnt habe in die zuständigen Regionen zu bringen. Die Ukrainer schätze ich werden, wenn überhaupt, nur für die absolut notwendige Zeit Schutz suchen und danach ihre Heimat wieder aufbauen

5 5 ANTWORTEN

TEILEN

MELDEN



2 26. August 2022, 23:19:23

0 72

Tja... In ein paar Jahren heißt es dann für uns österreichischer: rette sich wer kann ..

Schade drum. Great place 2 live...denken sich halt Millionen muslimische Typen auch.

antworten



5 21. Oktober 2022, 22:32:38

2 6

Ich glaube eher, dass sie mit der, echt blöden, Formulierung auf ein Problem hinweisen:

die kontinuierlich steigende Zahl der Moslems im Westen. Und eine Islamisierung Europas ist nicht in unserem Sinne.

antworten



12 9. Dezember 2022, 16:09:02

1 33

moschee, bezirk wien, osten der donau (IWF)

wenn ich die gesichter der männer sehe die am freitag aus der moschee kommen - und mit fast 70 hat mann/frau eine gewisse lebenserfahrung - bin ich mir sicher : da wird nicht immer friede, freude, eierkuchen gepredigt ...

antworten



ONLINE-MONITORING



Mario Kunasek is 😡 feeling pissed off.
November 29, 2022 · 🌐

...

Unfassbar, manche Schulen versuchen offenbar, das Weihnachtsfest abzuschaffen und aus dem Advent ein "ethisches Ritual" zu machen! 😡
Wir sagen ganz klar: Schluss mit voraussetzenden Gehorsam gegenüber dem Islam, wir lassen uns unsere christlich-abendländischen Traditionen nicht nehmen! 🙌
<https://www.kleinezeitung.at/.../Debatte-um-Brief-der...>



Karlheinz Miedler 24. Oktober 2022, 00:36:45 5 2

Solange sie ihr Kind keinen Fetzen aufsetzen ist alles ok

[antworten](#)



Prof. Dr. Günter Krenn 1 22. Oktober 2022, 18:23:56 0 11

Ausserdem ist es nicht erwünscht, dass die türkischen Frauen zu viel Deutsch lernen, da sie sonst am Ende zu selbstständig werden könnten. So aber ist und bleibt ihr Platz in der Öffentlichkeit stets drei Schritte hinter dem Mann.

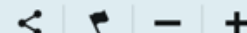
[antworten](#)



gottschalks Profil 7. August 2022, 10:56:03 1 13

Frag mich immer, was verdammt nochmal ein Muslimbruder in unserem Land verloren hat.

[antworten](#)



Kritischer Konsument 1 7. August 2022, 12:43:50 17 28

Gibt es überhaupt einen unpolitische Islam? Wozu diese Abgrenzung? Der Islam steckt im Mittelalter fest und kennt nur Extreme.

[antworten](#)



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**Let's stand strong
against anti-Muslim
racism!
Report your cases!**

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IBAN: AT12 2011 1840 1418 4700 BIC: GIBAATWWXXX





PROJECTS AND OUTREACH



Sedra Arab

Outreach- and project coordinator at the Dokustelle Austria

In 2022/2023, the Dokustelle Austria will expand its focus on community work and counselling services. In this way, more resources will be made available to people, communities, associations and mosques affected by anti-Muslim racism throughout Austria. Our many years of experience have shown that it is particularly important to increase awareness and sensitisation for dealing with experiences of racism within the affected communities, especially in the rural areas of the provinces as well as in the provincial capitals. In addition, the intensified networking – beyond Vienna – offers enormous potential to analyse and counter anti-Muslim racist tendencies throughout Austria. The nationwide focus was made possible at the end of 2022, after more than eight years of hard voluntary work, by a major project grant from the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection.

The aim of the strategic outreach measures throughout Austria is to build relationships with mosques and Muslim civil society organisations and to offer local workshops and trainings. First and foremost, a variety of „Know your Rights“ workshops will be offered, encouraging victims and witnesses to report incidents of anti-Muslim racism and strengthen their capacity to act. Furthermore, the area of psychosocial health and experiences of racism will be expanded.

Since 2022, the Dokustelle Austria has been implementing two major projects:

- „Expose Anti-Muslim Racism: Strategies for the Prevention of Violence“, which is funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Austria over the period of two years. The project aims to specifically expand legal and psychosocial counselling and empowerment structures with a focus on anti-Muslim racism and to strengthen the public relations work of the Dokustelle Austria in Austria, both online and offline. In these offerings, special emphasis is placed on multilingualism to promote accessibility.
- An outreach project funded by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR). This gives the Dokustelle Austria the opportunity to expand its networks with affected communities, but also with contact points for people affected by racism nationwide and to learn from them. The aim is that different Muslim communities learn about the work of the organisation and are strengthened to act against anti-Muslim racism and to report cases.

The Dokustelle Austria would like to thank each staff member for their commitment as well as partners – near and far – and is proud to have built up a strong network over the past years. With the urgently needed financial support it has now received; the organisation can expand and continue its important work.

RACISM

AND its effect

on MENTAL HEALTH



////////// The interaction with our close environment, family, friends, and society at large, determines and shapes our identity. In everyday social practice, the structure in which values and norms emerge becomes visible. Moreover, these values and norms provide information about how we should behave. In this context, familiar social practice can differ from our interactions and experiences with people at school, at work, at authorities and on public transport. These experiences can be ambivalent, sometimes irritating, painful or even frustrating.

Experiencing exclusion because of language or origin can be painful. The act of making people seem different is a racist practice in which (de)valuations are made, and boundaries are drawn. The marginalisation of people because of differentiation based on origin, ethnicity, skin colour or religious affiliation simultaneously entails social practices that regulate access to resources, goods, and services. Thus, racist structures in the form of institutions can determine who lives in which district and who can go to which school. „The border is not a spatial fact with sociological effects, but a sociological fact that is spatially formed.“⁽¹⁾ These spaces can be experienced violently by those concerned

Ümmü Selime Türe

Coordinator of the
psychosocial counselling
services at the Dokustelle Austria



who are read as Muslim, for example. Therefore, it is important to look closely at where most racist incidents happen.

The statistics of the Dokustelle Austria show that those affected experience anti-Muslim racist attacks more often in other areas, like f.e. in (semi) public spaces. The term (semi)public can be understood as parks, public transport, or shopping places. The fleeting encounters in everyday life and the anonymity that goes with it makes attacks against people perceived as Muslims easier. This is because „perpetrators arbitrarily choose unknown victims whom they then attack, only to disappear again without (usually) having to justify themselves, be persecuted or face the crime.“⁽²⁾ Often, victims report that they experience little to hardly any civil courage from bystanders and that this is a stressful situation for them. In the empowerment trainings of the Dokustelle Austria, participants worked out questions in groups and wrote down how they experience racism in public places. For example, looking away from racist attacks creates a feeling of helplessness, which was often expressed in various workshops in previous years. It was also found that these experiences are dominated by feelings of fear, which is why those affected develop different coping mechanisms, including compensation, withdrawal, and isolation. These should help them to stay in a safe environment to avoid dangerous situations.

Compensating is a kind of strategy and can be understood as follows: Marginalised persons, Black, Indigenous and/or People of Colour try to adapt in order not to stand out ‚negatively‘. The description ‚negative‘ refers to the constructed deficit, a lack of a ‚norm‘ that describes a dominant society. A white, Christian, Austrian dominant society defines itself by these and similar characteristics and sets itself apart from its supposed opposite. The self-definition is the negation of the opposite and thus the devaluation of the ‚other‘. For BIPOC individuals, white places can be associated with ‚proving‘ oneself. One type of coping strategy is a performative act of behaving as ‚white‘ as possible or letting possible inspections or questions wash over them. Not speaking one’s mother tongue in public places, being as ‚inconspicuous‘ and quiet as possible, not dressing in cultural, traditional clothing or performing exceptionally well are some examples that those affected tell from

their experiences. Anderson describes in his article „black and white spaces“ what interactions look like for Black people when they are in white places.

“Depending on how well the black person performs or negotiates, he or she may ‘pass inspection,’ gaining provisional acceptance from the immediate audience. But others there may require additional proof on demand. In public white spaces, like upscale shops or restaurants, many blacks take this sort of racial profiling in stride; they expect it, treat it as a fact of life, and try to go on about their business, hoping to move through the world uneventfully.”⁽³⁾

Being constantly under the radar can cause long-term stress for people affected by racism. In everyday life, people experience this situation as ‚normal‘, where they are treated like a second (or lower) class person and considered suspect, suspicious, or backward because they have hardly experienced it any other way. Likewise, this constant devaluation of one’s own person can lead to far-reaching damage to self-perception, as those affected violently internalise racist structures.

In the empowerment trainings of the Dokustelle Austria, the participants were asked what effects racist experiences have on them. The following answers were given, lack of acceptance and perspective, insecurity, inferiority complexes, not being able to live out their identity, lack of self-confidence, exclusion, isolation, passivity, and fear. What those affected experience is the negation of their identity. As a result, they themselves question their own person and experiences. This process is also known as gaslighting. Gaslighting is a kind of manipulation of those affected, which leads them to doubt their own perception. Racist discourses continuously question the perception of those affected, which also perpetuates racist structures. This form of violence is a constant reality for those affected and can destroy the self-confidence of those who have internalised the effects of this violent structure over the years.

From the generation of migrant workers to the post-9/11 era, racist, classist, dismissive, sexist, and queer-hostile narratives have been produced and discourses created that have particularly promoted a stereotypical representation of Muslims. The integration debates and media generalised representations underpinned these, portraying Muslim

communities as inherent, untrustworthy, and suspect. Discourses have an impact on everyday life and affect people's mental health.

"If you're a person of colour, the reality of racism is neither optional nor conceptual; it is deeply and painfully felt. This is known as "embodied inequality," which describes how discrimination raises the risk of many emotional and physical illnesses among people of colour."⁽⁴⁾

Another coping strategy besides compensating can be withdrawal and creating safer spaces. A violent structure brings about the search for a non-violent space. Especially mosques and local associations where Muslims can retreat can be places of healing without compensating and without code-switching. The surveillance and criminalisation of these spaces are further forms of intrusion into safe spaces and an act of violence. Therefore, more solidarity with civil society organisations, as well as local associations and active allyship is needed to create and protect violence-free spaces.

→ Dokustelle offers psychosocial counseling for victims of anti-Muslim racism and supports individuals who have been directly affected by racist acts with initial consultations and support.

→ The initial consultation serves as a pastoral approach to addressing the incident and empowers those affected by creating space to talk about racist experiences that are rarely heard.

How to reach our Psychosocial Consulting:

Opening hours: Mon- Thu,
9:00am- 15:00pm

Phone: 0676 40 40 005

Mail: beratung@dokustelle.at

Consultations take place
by appointment only.

(1) Simmel, Georg. 2017. Soziologie, 689. In Bruns, Claudia (Hg.). „Rasse“ und Raum. Topologien zwischen Kolonial-, Geo- und Biopolitik: Geschichte, Kunst, Erinnerung, Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2.

(2) Documentation and Counselling Centre. 2017. Anti-Muslim Racism Report 2016, 33.

(3) Goffman, Erving. 1959. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. In Anderson, Elijah. 2015. The White space. Sociology of Race and Ethnicity 1(1), 13.

(4) Krieger, Nancy. 2019/Silverstein, Jason. 2013. in Blackwell, Keylsy. 2018. why People of Color Need Places Without White People. The Arrow. <https://arrow-journal.org/why-people-of-color-need-places-without-white-people/> (Accessed 5/3/2023).

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

on RACIST POLICE VIOLENCE IN AUSTRIA

Dunia Khalil

Tips and possible courses of action
from legal and counselling expert

An essential part of the Dokustelle Austira's empowerment work consists of informing those affected about their legal options for action. The aim is to provide tools that improve protection against discrimination in practice and make it legally possible to fight discrimination that has already occurred. Our goal is to prevent the aggravation of experiences of discrimination through this knowledge transfer and to increase the chance for those affected to successfully take legal action afterwards. The following is a brief example of how to deal with racist police violence:

Know Your Rights!

Is there an ID card requirement in Austria?

In Austria there is no general obligation to provide identification. However, the police are authorised to establish the identity of a person if there are concrete reasons for doing so. Such reasons include, for example, that the police suspect a criminal offence or that you are in a place where a lot of criminal activities take place.

For non-Austrian citizens: Carry your travel document with you or keep it in a place that you can reach quickly, within about one hour at the most.

For Austrian citizens: oral transmission of personal data is sufficient.

What rights do I have if I am controlled?

You have the right to know why you are being stopped. Ask the police officer about the „reason and purpose of the stop“.

You have the right to ask the police officer for the badge number. However, as this can lead to escalation, you do not have to ask for it. It is also sufficient for a later follow-up. Remember the time and place of the police action.

You also have the right to have a „confidant“ present during the official act. This can be friends, but also passers-by who make themselves available.

The police may not send the person away if he or she does not disturb the official act.

Tip: You can also ask people passing by whether they could observe the official act as a witness.

When can I take legal action?

Police officers must adhere to the so-called Guidelines Ordinance, a kind of „code of conduct“ for police officers, during an official act. They are not allowed to give the impression of bias and treat people differently based on gender, skin colour, national or ethnic origin, religious beliefs, etc. during their official acts. If you have the impression that the control is based on racial profiling, for example, you can lodge a complaint (within 6 weeks). There are two ways to complain: Policy complaints and action complaints. The Documentation Centre can support you here!

Appeals can also be lodged against penal orders. If penalties are imposed for racist reasons, the Dokustelle Austria can also support you in this case!

May I film an official act?

Evidence is particularly important for a successful complaint. It is legally permissible to film an official act if it is not disturbed. The important thing here is: do not publish it without a legal assessment! Witnesses can also serve as good evidence.

Tips for witnesses:

- Observing an official act and subsequently offering oneself as a witness.
- Offer to be a confidant and observe the official act from close by without disturbing the official act, this will help the person concerned enormously. Attention: Do not forget to exchange contact details!
- Film official acts without disturbing the official act and do not publish the video afterwards without legal assessment. The video can be given to the person concerned as evidence.



This is how you can reach our legal advice service:

Opening hours: Mon- Thu,
9:00am- 15:00pm

Phone: 0676 4040005

Email: beratung@dokustelle.at

Consultations take place
by appointment only.



Focus:

When talking about ‚Islam‘ and ‚Muslims‘ in Austria, the term ‚political Islam‘ is regularly used in discussion. However, it is usually unclear what the term really stands for and what the intention of using it in discussion stands for.⁽¹⁾ Current developments indicate that the term is ideally suited as a conceptual term of the conservative right that was coined in the context of the failed global ‚War on Terror‘ and a European policy of fortification. Behind these discursive mechanisms are transnational security and military networks and cooperations, but also preventive actions - introduced through academic knowledge production and pedagogical measures - that shape a hegemonic security discourse about Muslims, classifying them as a potential threat.⁽²⁾

Genealogically, the mechanism of „problematizing the (Muslim) minority and portraying Muslims as threat and aliens“⁽³⁾ goes far back into Europe’s colonial history and persists in the coloniality of patterns of thought and action about the so-called Others. The term ‚political Islam‘, however, moves on to further dividing ‚these so-called others‘ into ‚good‘,

Political ISLAM

Iris Neuberg, Klaudia Wieser, Rumeysa Dür-Kwieder

‚democratically capable‘ and ‚integrable‘ Muslims on the one hand and ‚suspicious‘ Muslims on the other, whose activities need to be monitored. In this context, the political adjective becomes an exclusionary element that – according to Rüdiger Lohlker – is not interested in concrete solutions to existing social problems, but is used as a political-media instrument of struggle.⁽⁴⁾

Thus, the eternally elastic⁽⁵⁾ term ‚political Islam‘ has served Austrian politics for years as a tool to monitor Islam and Muslims who cannot be legally accused of anything and to construct them as dangerous. The construction of the dangerous Muslim or the dangerous Muslim woman does not take place arbitrarily, but follows a conscious practice, which is usually politically connoted and goes hand in hand with a commissioned production of knowledge.

In Austria, the production of knowledge about ‚Islam‘ and ‚Muslims‘ for the broader society takes place primarily through the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) of the Republic, which has been publishing statistics, trends and analyses on the topics of

‚integration and migration‘ in various publications since 2013, as well as offering various events on selected topics. The ÖIF was joined – as a further knowledge production centre – by the Documentation Centre for Political Islam set up by the conservative right government coalition in 2020, whose central concern is research into ‚political Islam‘ in Austria. The ÖIF also dedicated one of its publications to ‚Political Islam‘.⁽⁶⁾ In this context, the political scientist Farid Hafez speaks of a dispositive ‚Political Islam‘ in Austrian federal politics; a network consisting of „discourse, power and knowledge“ that has manifested itself over more than a decade through and in right-wing conservative politics and is deliberately used as a regulating instrument.⁽⁷⁾ This dispositive was politically instrumentalised in implementing the headscarf ban in kindergartens and schools (which was subsequently overturned by the Constitutional Court ⁽⁸⁾) and in the introduction of the new anti-terror package in Austria.⁽⁹⁾

The political scientist Schirin Amir-Moazami describes similar tendencies in Germany and shows that socio-economic and political interests are

pursued with a functional appropriation of the term ‚political Islam‘ to establish certain power relations and shape a white dominance culture (see the interview with Schirin Amir-Moazami in this report). For desired hierarchies to be consolidated, specific arrangements are needed that legitimise an imbalance in a global power politics that extends far beyond Austria's borders - with reference to Islam and connected believers.

Targeted knowledge production serves to reinforce undifferentiated narratives in society and subsequently to push the need to discuss general basic rights for Muslims. The situation in Austria is not different.

In fact, the instrumentalisation of a political understanding of Islam has a long history in political rhetoric. A major turning point was the split of the right-wing conservative party BZÖ with Jörg Haider at the head of the FPÖ in 2005. This marked the beginning of what from today's perspective can be described as a race to be politically ‚right-wing‘.

With the strengthening of right-wing politics and its use of Islam and Austria's Muslims in political agendas, ‚a problematic‘ was constructed that needed to be solved and researched. As a central goal, a presumed danger to Muslim life and Muslims in Austria became the subject of much debate. In the spirit of these developments, headlines such as „Muslims in Austria: Why does the coexistence fail?“⁽¹⁰⁾ or „Mullah, Mecca, Muezzin: How political is Islam?“⁽¹¹⁾ found their way into the media.

The need for a scientific underpinning of this rhetoric appeared in the following years. With the refugee movements of 2015 and a sudden danger constructed by the media, various studies and reports were created about the existing and newly arrived Muslims. Certain questions and topics suggested that right-wing populist discourses and thus also a priori biased assumptions were gaining scientific significance. Between 2015 and 2022 alone, the Dokustelle Austria counted up to 40 studies and reports on Muslims or Muslim-read organisations that emerged from the pages of the ÖIF, the Documentation Centre Political Islam and the Think Difference Advisory and Research Centre. These include the kindergarten study by professor Ednan Aslan, personally commissioned by former Federal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, and the study „The Muslim Brotherhood in Austria“ by the researcher Lorenzo Vidino, which forcibly underlies „Operation Luxor“ and has since been declared illegal by the

Higher Regional Court of Graz. The latter was not only a report of the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF), but a project in cooperation with the University of Vienna and the Austrian Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution.⁽¹²⁾

Both studies were strongly criticised at the academic and societal level.⁽¹³⁾ From 2015 onwards, the ÖIF alone published thirteen studies on ‚Islam‘ and ‚Muslims‘. This does not include the several reports that focused on Muslim-read migrant groups, such as Turks, Syrians, Afghans, and groups of people from the former Yugoslavia.

A documentation centre specifically dedicated to ‚Political Islam‘ is supposed to assess Muslim organisations and Muslim individuals according to their political orientation and potential danger. Reports published by the „Documentation Centre for Political Islam“ aim, among other things, to portray Austria's „suspect“ Muslims using insufficient scientific methods. Since 2020 alone, more than fifteen studies and reports have been published by the Documentation Centre for Political Islam, which allegedly dangerous organisations, associations, and individuals.⁽¹⁴⁾ The problem that arises from establishing such institutions is not the scientific debate per se, but the clear political orientation of these studies, which is reflected in the funding, research questions, methods, and epistemologies. Lohlker defines this in further detail as follows:

„If we recognise that debates about political Islam do not serve to analyse a real phenomenon, not even one that can be historically located, the word political Islam cannot in fact be used scientifically – at present at any rate – and it would be more precise to speak of various current political projects. These can be authoritarian, even exclusivist, totalitarian, democratic, monarchist, oligarchic, perhaps even anarchist - or whatever other description seems appropriate.“⁽¹⁵⁾

For years, the Dokustelle Austria has been pointing out that it is precisely such localisations of Muslim and/or Muslim-read organisations that lead to the consolidation of a - deliberate or unintentional - unease towards Muslims in society. Ultimately, this often leads to political action by Muslims, such as running denominational schools or founding aid organisations, women's associations, or youth groups, being viewed as suspicious.

As the online monitoring of the Dokustelle Austria has identified growing tendencies between the

use of the above-described dispositive ‚political Islam‘ and anti-Muslim racist hate comments on the internet, our monitoring team will continue to sharpen its focus on politically motivated knowledge production in this context in Austria.

In the comments section of various daily newspapers, as well as in social networks, it is recognisable that a constructed hatred against ‚the foreign‘ as well as the devaluation of ‚the foreign‘, often disguised as concern for the collective (Austrian) secular identity, is becoming acceptable. Significantly, it is often about the physical space that is occupied by visible Muslims and thus supposedly taken over at the same time. This would lead to a redistribution of dominance, which would re-locate power with the supposedly dangerous.

Therefore, the Dokustelle Austria will increasingly build transnational networks and cooperations with knowledge producers who are interested in an intersectional and critical examination of racism and hegemony about challenges and potentials in society as a whole. In this context, we are particularly pleased that we were able to conduct the following interview with Schirin Amir-Moazami.

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Knowledge production about Muslims and Islam makes me increasingly uncomfortable.

INTERVIEW

In this interview, political scientist Schirin Amir-Moazami talks to the Dokustelle Austria about knowledge production, inflationary terms of analysis and struggle, and why research is never free of political dynamics.

In 2018 you published the edited volume „The Inspected Muslim“, what made you want to work on this book?

I am concerned with the field of knowledge production primarily because I also produce knowledge about Islam and Muslims. My professorship for Islam in Europe is based in Islamic Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. This subject, like most disciplines that were responsible for the „non-European rest“ of the world, does not have an unproblematic history. The discipline emerged from the discourse of Orientalism on the assumption that we can study ‚the other‘ without questioning ourselves and without critically reflecting on our presuppositions. Even if Orientalism is now viewed critically, it is still inscribed in the discipline.

Secondly, I have become increasingly uncomfortable with knowledge production on Muslims and Islam in Europe. Especially since 9/11, all kinds of researchers have pounced on it. Now, at first glance, it is of course positive when topics are researched more intensively. As a scientist, I approve of that. But research is never free of political dynamics, and especially not in this subject area. What makes me uncomfortable is that public discourses have an echo in research. They are reflected in questionnaires addressed to Muslims. Especially in quantitative research, numbers are thrown around and categories are operated with, which can have devastating consequences.

To give an example here: In most cases, these questions focus on whether Muslims are compatible

with the liberal order of our society. And when something like „Is Allah more important to you or the Basic Law?“ or „Would you like to introduce Sharia law in Germany or in Austria?“ is asked, it is problematic. Suggestive questions are asked here, which in qualitative social research would immediately be described as an impure and scientifically not really justifiable method, because they provoke counter-questions: Why should Allah be weighed or balanced against the Basic Law? What exactly is meant by Sharia here? The exciting thing is also that in this subject area, all the basics and a certain consensus of scientific ethics and scientific standards are often thrown overboard.

Of course, this does not always happen intentionally. I think that most researchers believe that they are doing methodologically very clean and meticulous work. But I observe that a lot of presuppositions are written into the research and interview questions and are hardly reflected upon. Often the researchers have no contact at all with the so-called research objects. This is then also reflected in the methods. Authors believe that it is possible to interview people in their most intimate spheres from a desk or by telephone and then create curves, statistics and figures.

One example that comes to mind from the study is a colleague who claims to have found out that 46% of Muslims in Europe are fundamentalists. Full stop. He found this out scientifically through surveys in various European countries (often by asking questions like „Are you for us or against us?“).



Schirin Amir-Moazami

is Professor of Islam in Europe at the Institute for Islamic Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. Her research focuses on the politics of religion in Europe, secularism, political theory, gender issues and Islamic movements in Europe

This figure now circulates in public, in talk shows, and of course it animates political action. So, we can see a connection between this very problematic, partly popular research and the political action that is based on it.

When did the term ‚political Islam‘ become acceptable?

I haven't done any discourse analysis on it. We would probably have to analyse many terms in the context, for example the term ‚Islamism‘ or the term ‚fundamentalism‘. That was a term that was prominent for a while in the 1990s, although it originally arose in Christian contexts - think of the ‚Christian Fundamentalists‘ movement in the US at the end of the 19th century. Then the term ‚radicalisation‘ emerged, which is a term that describes a process. Then it moved on to ‚Salafism‘. These terms and their contexts of origin are different, but in the end, they somehow try to describe the same thing, and at some point, they are used so inflationarily that they hardly function as analytical categories any more. From that point on, they are then appropriated in such a way that they become terms of struggle and counter-concepts. This has also happened in recent years with the term ‚political Islam‘.

As early as the 1990s, Armando Salvatore pointed out in his book „Islam and the Political Discourse of Modernity“ that the concept of ‚political Islam‘ emerged during the 18th or 19th century. This was at a time when Orientalism was also experiencing its first heyday. Islam was placed in relation to the secularisation of Christianity. It was also at this time that scientists began to measure the world and divide it into different regions, religions, languages, and ‚races‘. It was in this context that the concept of ‚political Islam‘ came into being, as a counter-concept, so to speak, and already at that time as a fighting concept. It also served to sharpen the contours of Christianity, which, in contrast to Islam, was designed to be decoupled from political power. It is important to understand the mechanism that underlies this concept.

The interesting thing is that the term has always been in vogue over the course of time. Of course, there are different occasions that lead to such conjunctures, and the connotations of the term also change. But the basic mechanism can certainly be traced back to the beginnings of Orientalism. And of course, it is not only about the constitution of one's own through the other, but also about very

concrete power interests, i.e. interests in conquering territories, which also connect the term ‚political Islam‘ with colonialism. And this power orientation is also recognisable in some people who work scientifically on the term or in people who profit from it as a fighting term. We also see an economic component here.

Do you work with the term ‚political Islam‘ or do you analyse it?

I have not done any research on so-called fundamentalism or so-called Islamism or all the other terms that came up at some point. In fact, because that was never a central research question for me. Not because I don't find it relevant. Of course, there are always occasions to deal with it. There is such a thing as instrumentalisation by Islam for purposes that go in politicised or radicalised directions, but it has never had such significance for me. Maybe also because I never really saw the need for research like many others. I saw people jumping on it as if there were no other manifestations of Islam, and that alone stopped me.

The question is what one understands by the term ‚political Islam‘.

I have also been involved in research asking how radical are the preachers in this and that mosque and how does that influence the community? Such questions are often commissioned. What we did with such research questions was to ask them more openly. We first look at what happens in these mosque movements and work ethnographically over a longer period of time. This avoids collecting only fragments that confirm or falsify a suspicion. We then looked at how the congregation relates to these preachers and can we even speak of a congregation as a homogeneous unit or is there much more dynamism and heterogeneity in it?

At that time, the topic was ‚radicalisation‘ and not ‚political Islam‘, but we noticed that the term does not help us at all, because the forms of religiosity are much more complex and dynamic than they can be clearly assigned to just one category. The research was also specifically about young people who perhaps identify with certain preachers because they are susceptible for some reason. However, this does not mean that they only follow this opinion or therefore radicalise themselves in a linear process. We have also noticed in these long-term studies that it does not make sense to create behavioral profiles, as is often done in social

psychological research. It is much more about interpreting phenomena in the respective social, political and economic contexts and in larger contexts. It is therefore about asking, for example, how structural inequality, racism and geopolitical contexts interact and promote radicalisation processes, instead of focusing solely on the individual or solely on Islam and its political potential.

What dynamics do you observe in Austria and Germany now about the topic of ‚political Islam‘?

Lately, I have been working more on the topic of prevention policies, and this is still very much in vogue in Germany. Both in terms of funding and the abundance of people and institutions that then move into this field. In the last five to ten years, this has taken on a very expansive character. Funding amounts have gone steadily upwards, with the justification (this is often the first sentence in descriptions of the funding) that ‚Islamism‘ or ‚political Islam‘ is a „constantly growing phenomenon“. This is simply assumed. Sometimes there are even figures on this, but where they come from is not always clear either. For example, constitutional protection reports in Germany have used the same numbers for years. Something like „60 people belong to jihadist Islam“, so and so many to „Salafist“ and so and so many to „legalist“. I wonder what criteria are used to determine these numbers. Another problem is that with the funding, the community also has to jump on board the prevention work. This often happens out of necessity, because otherwise there are only a few other funding options. In this context, it is not uncommon for anti-Muslim racism to be dealt with under the topic of ‚Islamism prevention‘, because the phenomenon is more acute and because it seems more important to these organisations. Instead of ‚Islamism prevention‘, one could also say prevention against ‚political Islam‘. That is interchangeable.

What does this dynamic mean for knowledge production itself?

Both in reports on the protection of the constitution and in academic analyses of the phenomenon of ‚political Islam‘, there is often talk of „evidence-based knowledge“ or a claim to objectivity. But if we look a little closer at this research, it is often like a balloon. There’s a lot of air in it, but it quickly turns into a shriveled balloon once it’s out. You can find very little substance in

these studies. So especially with these scientific commissioned studies, they are of course under pressure to legitimise themselves and have to justify themselves scientifically and methodologically. There are pages and pages of descriptions of the methodology, and yet the questions and the analyses remain hair-raising. It is noticeable that there is often not the slightest knowledge about Islamic discourse traditions and that the researchers cannot classify much at all. Mostly, they acquire ABC knowledge and quote the same sources repeatedly. In very few cases, however, are these ethnographic studies in which one’s own perspectives and the positions from which the researchers speak are questioned, but rather scientific studies that promise to deliver ‚representative‘, ‚reliable‘ data about communities.





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Services of the Dokustelle Austria

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For more than eight years, the Dokustelle Austria has been offering workshops and trainings for associations, mosque communities, schools and various institutions with a focus on anti-Muslim racism, anti-racism work and possibilities for action. Among other things, these topics can be booked:

- Introduction to Structural Racism
- Introduction to Anti-Muslim Racism
- Know Your Rights: Strategies for Action against Anti-Muslim Racism
- Antimuslim Racism and Intersectionality
- Safer (Muslim) Healing Space: Creating Protected Spaces
- Antimuslim Racism and Health
- Antimuslim Racism and Educational Policies
- Racist Narratives in Media and Images
- Online Hate Speech

Our services are primarily aimed at people affected by racist discrimination. In addition, the Dokustelle Austria offers awareness-raising workshops and trainings for people privileged by racism that encourage critical reflection. The contents of the workshops are based on the trainers' many years of practical experience and can be individually adapted to time resources and price capacities, depending on the request and target group.

The Dokustelle Austria strives to provide workshops and trainings for affected communities free of charge. More information can be found on our website: <https://dokustelle.org/empowerment/workshops-und-trainings>

The Dokustelle Austria can be reached by phone (0676 4040005) and by e-mail (office@dokustelle.at , beratung@dokustelle.at) from Mon- Thurs, 9:00- 15:00. Psychosocial and legal counselling is available by appointment in the office or online in various languages.

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Recognition of anti-Muslim racism as a society-wide phenomenon

1. A uniform working definition of anti-Muslim racism should be recognised as a priority and implemented as soon as possible. The recognition of the term and the phenomenon of anti-Muslim racism is still denied in many areas in Austria, especially at the political level. This is particularly evident in the way Muslims are portrayed as a potential danger to society, as well as in the non-recognition of structurally conditioned racist experiences experienced by Muslims and those read as Muslim. All of this leads to the restriction of the freedoms of the people concerned; rights that must urgently be upheld within the framework of the rule of law and democratic principles.

2. Anti-Muslim racism should be recognised as a tool for analysis in all areas of life, taking intersectionality into account. Especially in the areas of education, work, housing and access to goods and services, various interdependent mechanisms of exclusion are at work and need to be addressed.

Implementation of a National Action Plan against Racism

3. An announced National Action Plan (NAP) against racism should be developed and implemented immediately. The NAP should include anti-Muslim racism as a phenomenon and build on an intersectional, institutional, and structural understanding of racism.

4. Measures and strategies against racism planned by the government should always be developed and implemented in close cooperation with civil society actors, especially organisations critical of racism as well as community-based and stakeholder-centred organisations. Prioritising the expertise and needs of those affected should be a prerequisite for all measures and strategies.

Expansion and promotion of counselling centres with a focus on psychosocial counselling and civil society organisations

5. The establishment and continuous expansion of comprehensive civil society counseling services for victims of racist violence must be guaranteed. Securing the long-term operation of these counseling centers is a vital demonstration of state solidarity with those affected by anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim racism, racism against Romnja and Sintizze, racism targeting people perceived as Asian, and anti-Black racism.

To achieve this, the federal government should support the creation of a nationwide, independent, and highly qualified counseling network that is easily accessible and located close to affected communities. It is the government's responsibility to ensure sustainable, long-term funding for these essential services.

6. As a complement to counselling services, the government, various institutions and society should take responsibility for combating racism in all its forms. This can be done, among other things, through the nationwide promotion of specific and tailor-made support services for people affected by racism and marginalised communities, including psychosocial counselling or therapy.

Protection from emotional and financial stress in criminal proceedings

7. Counselling and support centres accompanying affected persons should be granted the right to sue associations to relieve affected persons emotionally and financially, to protect them from secondary victimisation and to facilitate individual complaints against racism and other forms of discrimination.⁽¹⁾

Evaluation of investigations into racist crimes

8. Investigations into racist crimes should be evaluated in detail and made accessible to the public for

reasons of transparency. Many of the reported criminal offences with a (supposedly) racist motive are still discontinued at an early stage. It is the task of the Ministry of Justice to install effective evaluation procedures to continuously find out and implement improvements for the more effective protection of those affected.

9. The protection afforded by the Federal Equal Treatment Act should be extended to other grounds of discrimination, in particular religion, in all areas without exception.

Ensuring a security policy aligned with human rights

The criminal offense § 247b StGB („religiously motivated extremist links“) and the related aggravating circumstance § 33 StGB („for religiously motivated extremist motives“), introduced under the Anti-Terror Law (TeBG) in the summer of 2021, should be critically assessed and revised. This evaluation should be conducted by a committee of diverse, interdisciplinary experts.

As currently formulated, these laws have the potential to result in significant human rights violations. Therefore, a thorough review and necessary adjustments are essential to ensure compliance with human rights standards.

Protection against discrimination and respect for religious freedom

10. State authorities must take necessary steps to fully and equally protect the religious freedom of all communities without subjecting them to blanket surveillance that may create an atmosphere of intimidation. This includes safeguarding the right of Muslim communities to organise their religious activities and express their beliefs freely.

Protection from unjust criminalisation

11. To uphold religious freedom, the following principles should be considered when developing and implementing strategies for preventing violent extremism and deradicalisation:

- Religious practices, including dress codes, should not be seen as signs of radicalisation.
- Simply being Muslim or affiliated with Muslim organizations should not be used as a basis for government surveillance.
- Engaging in Muslim prayers should not lead to general suspicion.
- Using these factors as justification for suspicion, surveillance, or criminalisation poses a serious risk of anti-Muslim discrimination.

Establishment of independent supervisory bodies for the executive and security services

12. An independent investigation of „Operation Luxor“ as well as the psychosocial support of those directly and indirectly affected should be guaranteed.

13. An independent complaints body should be established, which can independently initiate and conduct investigations into allegations of abuse against police officers. To be effective and geared towards the actual protection of those affected, the complaints body must be subject to continuous evaluation and meet the standards set by the European Court of Human Rights.

Strengthen community work, civil courage, and anti-racism work

14. Acts of solidarity and support for civil society organisations that face defamation, dehumanisation, and violence for their work against anti-Muslim racism should be actively encouraged. This includes taking a clear and consistent stance against anti-Muslim racism across various sectors.

15. Anti-racism empowerment initiatives should be integrated as a fundamental element in funding programs related to political education, democracy promotion, extremism prevention, and youth work, ensuring adequate support.

16. Racism-conscious therapeutic approaches should receive structural and financial backing. Additionally, psychological and therapeutic training programs should incorporate mandatory anti-racism content to raise awareness among future therapists and ensure that the number of professionals trained in racism-sensitive therapy meets the needs within the Austrian context.

(1) Here we refer to the Berlin State Anti-Discrimination Act as a good practice example. This so-called „litigation status“ offers financial, psychological and professional relief to the person concerned and lowers the threshold for filing lawsuits against discrimination on an individual level. According to this, anti-discrimination associations can take over legal protection for a person with legal standing if that person declares his or her agreement. This means that an association can sue on its own behalf in place of the person affected by discrimination, assuming all the risks and obligations of the person.





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