

## **Interview with Hichem**

Anonymised in front of running camera  
Basel, 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2020<sup>1</sup>

The conversation was held in Arabic and French and has been translated into German and now into English.

Content Notion:

Physical violence, offender victim repentance, refusal of rights, groupspecific hostility, humiliation

---

*How long have you been in this camp?*

"I've been in Switzerland for six months now. I didn't know where to go to seek asylum. So I stayed outside, on the street. People then told me I could go to the asylum-camp where I'd get food, shelter and rest. So I came here and shortly after I had my Interview.

But it's not an asylum-camp, it's a prison. When I arrived they welcomed me, but I had no clue.

The Securitas, the ORS<sup>2</sup> - you don't get humane treatment. They do not treat us well, on the contrary, they abuse us. They're always looking for trouble, without cause. And they always find a reason to beat us.

One day I was ill. I was fine, as long as I remained outside, but when I came into the camp I wasn't well. Outside, without shelter, I was okay but inside the *camp* I was afraid and stressed. There, you don't get any food and you have to get up at 7 am, even if you haven't been able to sleep.

One day, the Securitas came in our room at 7 am, threw the windows open and pulled my blanket away. One grabbed my arm and dragged me up, out of the bed. I was shocked, I'd just woken up. I asked him to release my [injured] hand, because the doctor had prescribed rest. He said I should immediately go downstairs. But I didn't want to. So he dragged me out of the bed and lead me downstairs [in a cell].

---

<sup>1</sup> The Interview was led by a journalist and was being filmed simultaneously. In addition, it was recorded by members of our collective and is now presented here in a revised version.

<sup>2</sup> The ORS Service AG is running the federal asylum camp in Basel. For further information see chapter 1: *Camp structures - who is responsible?*

There he beat me. He hit me with his fist on the diaphragm and I couldn't breathe. The ambulance came and brought me to the hospital where I remained for two days. I asked the doctor for a paper, an attestation. But back in the *camp* they doubted my attestation, ignored it and just sent me up to our room.

Every time I addressed someone [to talk about my experience of violence] they didn't listen. I do not want to talk to them anymore, only with my legal representative. But they [the legal representation] work together with them as well.

At the *camp* there are people of many different nationalities. But only people who come from the Maghreb are abused this much. The Securitas provoke us, and then they call the police and tell them, we were the ones making trouble.

I will tell you about my experience. Once I was just one minute late, but they made me wait outside until 3 am. The other people who came late were admitted. They always provoke the minors. If we protest, they bring us to the *cell* where they beat us. So much violence happens there. Against people from the Maghreb, violence is committed daily. I don't want to go back, I prefer sleeping on the streets. I can't go back. I cannot stand it anymore.

There are people who say, in Switzerland it's not good, but there are people here who helped us, as well."

*What kind of contact do you have with the legal representation?*

"Since I've left the *camp*, none at all. That was a month ago."

*How/Where do you live now?*

"They assigned me to another *camp* and transferred me."

*Is the described room always the same?*

"Yes it's always the same, the *cell*."

*What does this room look like?*

"The walls are all about 1 meter long. There's a door of metal, with a tiny window, which can only be opened or closed from the outside. Other than that it's just four naked walls. They are white."

*Is it true, that people are sometimes brought there naked?*

"Once I was brought there wearing only underpants. When the ambulance came to get me, I was still only wearing underpants."