

## Testimonial Nadji

Basel, 07.04.2020

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

Content Note:

Physical violence, victim blaming, denial of rights

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"I hate my life in the camp. Ever since I arrived at the camp, I feel listless, depressed, frustrated. The Securitas do whatever they want. In the *camp*, it's not allowed to record videos or audio. So, it's hard to collect evidence against the Securitas. The Securitas are hostile toward certain groups of people, especially toward Arabs. The Securitas are full of hate, they don't talk to us. You can't reason with them. You also can't talk to the people of the ORS, they always refer us to other employees of the ORS. The ORS, Securitas, and nurses are all the same.

I'll tell you about one incident. I went to the *camp* at 19:00 and asked at the gate whether I'd be allowed to go inside. The "Russian" [*le russe*] told me to come back at 20:00. He didn't give me a reason why. At 20:00 I went to the reception and asked again whether I'd be allowed to go inside. It was cold. But the "Russian" still didn't want to let me in and tried to close the door. I put my walker between the door and the frame. The "Russian" grabbed me and pushed me against the metal fence with all his might. This Securitas is aggressive, he does marital arts and "trains" with people from the Maghreb, he beats us. After he pushed me away, I fell. I said that I was in pain. At 20:20 two women\* [asylum seekers of the camp, not from the Maghreb] came and asked what happened. The "Russian" inspected them and let them in. I still wasn't allowed to go inside. So, I went to a friend by public transport and spent the night there. On the next day, at 15:00 in the afternoon, other Securitas were there at the gate and let me in. I asked for a physician and demanded that the video recordings of the camera at the gate be checked concerning the incident. I wanted to press charges against the "Russian" and asked how to proceed. I was told that I just had to write a complaint and file it, no matter in what language. So, I wrote it in Arabic and submitted it to the direction of the *camp*. Until now I still haven't heard back from them. Later I left the *camp* once again. When I came back the "Russian" was there again. He searched me at the entrance but did not find anything. While frisking me he deliberately pressed his fingers on my injury. He asked me to take off my watch that I got from a friend and to give it to him. The "Russian"

confiscated my watch because he thought it was very expensive. Then he called the police. The police were surprised that they were called because of such a trifle. They confiscated my watch but gave it back ten days later and decided that it wasn't stolen. That's direct racism, you can't ever be right. The conditions at the camp are a disaster, the asylum seekers are extremely abused. I've seen people from other regions of the world who took food upstairs into their rooms. The Securitas saw that too and didn't say anything. Arabs are strictly forbidden from doing that.

Once the "Russian" beat a minor. He was charging his phone at 23:00 [sleeping time is at 22:00]. He didn't have an extension cable, so he went to the hallway. A Securitas passed by, together with an asylum seeker. The minor asked the Securitas if he could charge his phone there in order to talk to his mother. The Securitas just went up to him and pushed him without a warning. The minor lost his balance and fell against a trash can. He complained and asked why the Securitas would do something like that. The Securitas then grabbed him and took him downstairs violently. He called the other Securitas and told them that the minor provoked him. We all immediately intervened. Also, all of the Securitas were on the upper floor. We were pushed out of our rooms, they even drew pepper spray, but fortunately didn't use it. The minor they ill-treated was taken downstairs, to the first floor. He was crying for help: *Don't leave me alone!* So, I hobbled towards the stairs and threw my walker down the stairs at the Securitas and said: *Come, hit me, too!* I saw the minor at the bottom of the stairs, his nose was bleeding and his neck was bruised.

The "Russian" behaves like he's the boss, he's the unofficial leader of the Securitas. Other people then called the police and they arrived at the camp at about 24:00 or 1:00. They talked to the Securitas who said that there had been a fight between Arabs. The police then took four of our people with them, including the heavily bleeding minor. One ORS employee cried while observing this. She said: *It's not their fault, you can't do this [see Second Interview with Nabil]* These four had to spend a night in police custody and in the morning, a police report was written. The Securitas managed to lay the blame on innocent people and on the victim of their violence.

The physician prescribed me three months of rest, but this rest hasn't happened until now. That's what I wish for, rest and that my injury heals. Once I didn't sleep well and couldn't get up at 7:00 [wake-up call in the camp]. Later a Securitas came and pulled my blanket away. I was confused and tried to talk to him, wanted to find out what was happening. But he immediately hit me without answering. I raised my arms to protect my face, but he punched me on the diaphragm. The punch was so hard that I couldn't breathe anymore. An ambulance came and brought me to the University Hospital. These stories are only a small part of what is happening in there. There are a lot more people who are affected by this violence, but they have been relocated to other camps.

All of the Securitas are equally bad. The Securitas know that it's difficult for the Swiss authorities to deport people from the Maghreb, so they treat them badly. There are no women\* from the Maghreb in the camp. The people in the camp aren't racist towards each other. We try to somehow handle the situation. We can't do anything but sleep and eat. We want to be left alone."