

What is this brochure for?

The purpose of this brochure is to share information about ongoing events at the federal asylum camp¹ in Basel, and in particular to bring attention to the violence experienced by asylum seekers in Basel. The documentary information presented in this brochure and published by the collective 3 Rosen gegen Grenzen was gathered by diverse activists, people and groups from the region of Basel.

Early last year, activists first documented conversations in which asylum seekers talked about their experiences in the camp. More conversations were recorded in February 2020, after an incidental encounter with a group of minors from the federal asylum camp. The teen-age asylum seekers at the encounter all spoke of violence, especially by employees of Securitas AG². During the last months, and thanks to intense translation work, many more conversations and further material documenting the violent conditions at the camps were collected.

Some of the conversations are transcribed below. Sadly, the voices of the asylum seekers are rarely heard outside the fences that surround the camp.

The brochure is divided in two parts. The first part presents a collection of conversations and interviews. The described (violent) experiences - that can be conveyed only by those who lived and survived them - offer a glimpse into Switzerland's new federal camp system. The statements speak for themselves and are thus deliberately left uncommented upon. The second part offers further information regarding the camp's structure and institutions. For complementary information, we direct the reader to the reports of SRF³ Rundschau (of May 13th 2020) and WOZ⁴ (of May 14th 2020).

Our greatest respect goes to the asylum seekers who had the courage and strength to share their experiences of violence. We have changed their names to protect their identities. Likewise, sensitive documents (as photos or videos) were not published as originals. One photo, reinterpreted as a drawing, is included in the brochure.

¹ By federal asylum camp we mean the one at Freiburgerstrasse in Basel

² The firm Securitas AG is currently the assigned security service for the federal asylum camp in Basel and for further housings in and around Basel.

³ Swiss national Radio and Television

⁴ Swiss Newspaper

Further notes

Statements by the asylum seekers were often translated multiple times, depending on the language skills of the interviewees and interviewers. Nuances of the conversations were likely modified by the translators and reporters. Nonetheless, we attempted to depict the material as true to its original form as possible. During the editing, we strove for a non-discriminatory writing style. Hence, designations are in quotes. Words actually used by interviewees (i.ex. *asylum*, *arabs*) are italicized. Also, we value gender-neutral writing. By using asterisks (*) in the German original version we wanted to point out that many gender-identities exist beyond the man/woman binary. The asterisk also points out attributions that are linked to terms as i.ex. man/woman or male/female.

The English language is more gender neutral than German, which is why the asterisk will rarely be needed. But we would like to point out that the sentiment of inclusive and non-discriminatory language will be adopted as it stands in the original version.

Furthermore, we would like to point out that the recorded conversations contain descriptions of extreme physical and psychological violence along with descriptions of the day-to-day life in the camp. We warn the reader that some of the descriptions i.eg. of sexual violence are explicit and may be disturbing. Therefore, the individual reports are marked with content notions. Look after yourselves and seek support from persons close to you if needed.

Finally, we would like to add that all persons to whom we spoke during the process of documenting the experiences at the camp in the region of Basel were socialized as men*. They all came from north Africa and had travelled alone. Some of them are minors.