

Lager-Watch Thüringen



Know your rights.
Independent information
against fear and isolation.



Lager-Watch Thüringen

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Content

3 Be Brave!

4 Know Your Rights

Privacy
Administration and Social Workers
What Are Security Allowed to Do?
How Can I Complain?

6 Health and Special Needs

Health Insurance Card (Gesundheitskarte)
Pregnancy and Birth
Help with chronic diseases and disabilities
Mental Health
Problems with Camp Doctors

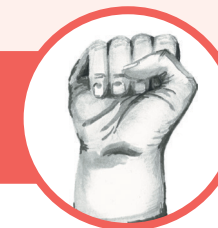
8 What to Do against Deportations

Look for a Lawyer and Appeal Against the Decision
Other Ways of Preventing a Deportation
Get in Touch with Support Groups

10 Build a Team and Get Organised

11 Contact

Be Brave!



This brochure is edited by the “**Lager Watch Thüringen**” network of initiatives advocating refugees’ rights and supporting the fight for the right of refugees and asylum seekers to stay. We want to inform residents of Initial Reception Centres (Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen) and Collective Accommodation Centres (Gemeinschaftsunterkünfte) and campaign, together with you, for better living conditions. Our most important message to you is:

Be brave and know your rights!

Basic and human rights apply to everybody, even, and especially, when you live in accommodation centres and similar facilities.

We will support you if your rights are not respected. We will cooperate with you and other residents to document such violations of your rights, put you in touch with experts, and help you take legal action. Please contact us by e-mail or messenger:

E-mail:

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We stand together to overcome isolation, fear and silence.

Residents of Initial Reception Centres and Collective Accommodation Centres are in a difficult position. Many rights concerning everyday life are restricted by law or house rules. If you witness violations of fundamental basic and human rights in your facility, you can get in touch with us. You can also contact us anonymously. Defending your rights is protected by law. If you witness violations of basic rights but don’t know what to do in the situation, note down anything you think could have been a violation. Record the date, time, and cause of the problem as well as the names of those involved and what exactly happened. Have other witnesses confirm what happened or take pictures and videos with your mobile phone that might show what’s happened to you and others.

Know Your Rights

What Are Staff and Administration Allowed to Do?



Privacy

Nobody is allowed to open your post if you don't give them permission. Opening your post is punishable by law. Your room must be lockable. Nobody is allowed to enter your room if you don't give them permission. There are only two exceptions to this rule: Either police can produce a search warrant, or it's a case of imminent danger (such as fire or flooding). If something needs to be fixed in your room, you must be informed beforehand. Furthermore, nobody is allowed to lock your room, not even during quarantine. Nobody is allowed to enter your room and search your things. Police are allowed to enter your room and search your things only when they have obtained a search warrant from court. You are entitled to receive visitors. Nobody is allowed to prevent you from doing so. The only exceptions are if your visitor is dangerous or generally banned from entering the facility. You are entitled to a personal lockable cupboard if you share a room with others.

Administration and Social Workers

What are the tasks of the facility administrators and social workers?

The administrators are there to administrate the facility, nothing more. Social workers are there so you can approach them and ask them questions. They can provide help with different things, for example: Applying for benefits, finding a German language course, scheduling doctor's appointments, counselling on family issues, registering your children in a kindergarten or school, supporting you when you have mental health issues. They are also supposed to protect you against violence, and you can approach them when you have suffered violence.

What are my rights when I have experienced violence in a facility?

When you have suffered violence, you are entitled to immediate protection and support from the staff of the facility. This includes personal support and counselling. In Collective Accommodation Centres, both male and female contact persons must be reachable. Social workers must maintain confidentiality and are not allowed to act without authorisation. It is you who decides if you want to go the police and file a report or not. It is your right that the offender be transferred to another facility. You are entitled to medical and psychological examination and treatment. Furthermore, you have the right to approach an independent counselling centre. This might be useful in case the staff of the facility don't provide enough protection. If you are a woman and have been subject to violence, you can contact the local women's refuge or a counselling centre for women. You can also call the '**Violence against Women**' (**Gewalt gegen Frauen**) helpline (+498000116016). They provide telephone counselling in different languages. The local Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) is responsible for the protection of children. When it is staff, security, or police that commit

acts of violence, it can be useful to contact an independent counselling centre, too. **Ezra**, one such centre, supports victims of right-wing, racist, and anti-Semitic violence in Thuringia.

What are social workers and administrators not allowed to do?

They don't decide on how much money you receive. That's the Social Welfare Office's (Sozialamt) responsibility. They don't decide either whether you will receive an apartment. That, too, is the Social Welfare Office's responsibility. However, social workers can provide the Social Welfare Office with information about who is eligible for an own apartment or who needs one particularly urgently. Social workers have no say in what concerns your application for asylum. It is the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) that is in charge of your application. Social workers do not decide on whether you will be deported (Abschiebung) or whether your deportation will be postponed (Duldung) either. It is the Immigration Office (Ausländerbehörde) and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees that take these decisions together. Sometimes, the Immigration Office tries to obtain information from the facility's administrators that they need in order to deport you.

What are social workers and administrators entitled to do?

Social workers can inform the authorities if you haven't been in the facility for a longer period of time. That might have negative consequences on your benefits and your right to stay. As long as you are obligated to live in the facility, you should at least show up there regularly and check your post. The facility administration has the right to decide in which room you shall live. They must, however, consider your personal situation.

What Are Security Allowed to Do?

Security are not the police and don't have any special rights.

They are not allowed to body-search you. They are not allowed to record your personal information. They are not allowed to take and withhold your passport or other documents as well. The security's task is to enforce house rules. If the house rules state that certain objects are not permitted, security can check on that. The house rules, however, must be written in a way which is intelligible to everybody. Apart from that, security have the right to check your ID in order to see if you actually live in the facility.

How Can I Complain?

If the facility administration or staff don't comply with the rules, you need not put up with that. It is best for you to try to settle the problem internally directly with those involved and talk to them. You can ask other residents for support in order to talk with social workers or the facility administration. If you can't settle the problem internally, you can contact external organisations such as **Lagerwatch** or the **Refugee Council of Thuringia** (Flüchtlingsrat Thüringen).



Health and Special Needs

Health Insurance Card (Gesundheitskarte)

Everybody in Thuringia whose asylum application is being processed receives a health insurance card.

It is usually after your initial reception (Erstaufnahme) that you receive the health insurance card. The health insurance card allows you to go to see the doctor when you are sick or have pains.

Pregnancy and Birth

Pregnant women have special needs (besondere Bedarfe).

That means they need things that others don't need. Pregnant women, for example, need medical care, protection, and other things for themselves and their babies. If you are pregnant, you are entitled to regularly go to see the doctor and have yourself checked. You are entitled to a midwife that supports you before, during, and after giving birth. You are also entitled to be treated in hospital. If you are pregnant, you receive a pregnancy health record (Mutterpass). In the pregnancy health record, all your medical visits are logged. You might need new clothes for yourself and the baby. Or do you need to buy diapers, furniture and other things? In that case you can apply for these pregnancy-related special needs (Schwangerenmehrbedarf) to be covered. You can file the application at the Social Welfare Office and, later, at the Jobcentre. The asylum procedure counselling service (Asylverfahrensberatung) and social welfare counselling service (Soziale Beratung) can help you with the application.



Help with chronic diseases and disabilities

Do you have a disability causing problems in your everyday life?

If yes, you are entitled to support. You have to be accommodated in a way that you can reach your room or

the bathroom. You are entitled to medical care and auxiliary means such as wheelchairs. Talk to the asylum procedure and social welfare counselling services. They can help with your applications. Apart from that, it is important that a doctor confirms the disability or disease and that you receive medical assistance.

Mental Health

You don't sleep well and have nightmares? Or you suffer from bad memories, anxiety or you feel great sadness?

In that case you are entitled to support and care in order to feel better soon. Do talk to others about how you are doing. This way you can find help. It is also important for your asylum procedure. You might talk with the counsellors of the asylum procedure counselling service and social welfare counselling service. They aren't therapists but can help find organisations that provide support.

At **Psychosoziales Zentrum REFUGIO Thüringen** there are trained psychologists offering support.

Another such organisation is **Albatros** that has their office in the Suhl Initial Reception Centre. Albatros offers social welfare and mental health counselling. They aren't therapists.

Ipsa in Erfurt also offers such counselling. At Ipsa, you can receive social welfare and mental health counselling. They aren't therapists.



Problems with Camp Doctors

During your asylum procedure, you are entitled to medical care only in emergency cases according to the Asylum Seeker Benefits Act (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz). The Initial Reception Centre or the camp doctor are responsible for that. Are you having problems with the camp doctor? Is your medical issue not taken seriously? Are you denied adequate care? Are you looking for a second opinion? Do you need a translator for a doctor's appointment? In all those cases, **MediNetz Jena**, which is active throughout Thuringia, can help you.



What to Do against Deportations



In this section, we provide information that might be useful in order to prevent a deportation.

When your asylum application is rejected, keep calm. There are many ways to prevent a deportation which means there are many reasons for you to keep fighting. As soon as you receive the negative decision, every day matters. It is important for you to act as soon as possible. Here's what you should do:

Look for a Lawyer and Appeal Against the Decision

There are many ways to take legal action against a deportation. To do that, you should always commission a lawyer.

As soon as you have received the decision, you shouldn't lose any time because you only have a short period of time to appeal against a negative decision. If the letter from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees states that your application has been "rejected" (abgelehnt), you will only have two weeks' time. If your application has been rejected as "inadmissible" (unzulässig) or "manifestly unfounded" (offensichtlich unbegründet), you will have only one week's time.

Other Ways of Preventing a Deportation

Even if your appeal has been dismissed, there are other ways of preventing a deportation.

Even if your appeal has been dismissed, there are other ways of preventing a deportation. The Immigration Office may allow you to stay in Germany for other reasons and, in some cases, is even obliged to do so, E.g., if you have started a professional training programme or are too ill to be deported. The law regulates many different situations requiring that the Immigration Office let you stay in Germany. To learn more about your chances to be allowed to stay, you should definitely ask a lawyer or a counselling centre for help.



A negative decision on your application does not necessarily mean that you will be deported.

You can appeal the decision to a court or might be entitled to stay in Germany for other reasons. A good lawyer and good counselling can help you advocate your rights. It's of utmost importance to keep calm and to look for people or counselling that might help you as soon as possible. You can do that even before receiving the decision.

Get in Touch with Support Groups

There are many groups and organisations in Thuringia and Germany that can help you.

Soli-Asyl Thüringen is a network providing safe accommodation as well as financial, medical, and legal support for people threatened with deportation.

Refugee Law Clinic Jena is a student-based legal counselling service in Jena offering advice on asylum and immigration law.

Refugee Council of Thuringia (Flüchtlingsrat Thüringen) is an association advocating for the interests and protection of refugees and immigrants. They offer counselling and assistance in individual cases. On their website, the Refugee Council also makes available useful information.

It is very important to have a lawyer who is willing to advocate for you. If you don't know any lawyer or don't know which lawyer in your area is reliable, you can contact the aforementioned organisations. Ask the lawyers if they have any experience in asylum law or similar cases as yours.



Build a Team and Get Organised



As in most other struggles, you can best fight for your rights by building a team, documenting problems, and making demands.

This works even better when you don't stay alone but look for support. You can team up with others living in your facility in order to discuss problems and find solutions. Sometimes, you might need advice from experts, people that know a lot and can explain different possible actions to take such as lawyers, doctors, and psychologists. What you need most, however, are friends that help you to not give up.

Stay strong in the struggle!



Who are we?

The Lager-Watch Thuringia network was founded on 29.09.2020 in the course of the violent events in the initial reception center in Suhl. Together with refugees affected by camp accommodation and supporters, we document the structural, racist and physical violence of camp accommodation in Thuringia. Our goal is to make the grievances and conditions in the Thuringian camps visible. We stand together to break isolation, fear and silence.

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