

In the shadow of Corona: Police Violence against women and children in a Lager in Brandenburg

On June 1st a woman, who lives in a Lager* in Brandenburg sent us an alarming video-clip, recorded on the day before. The video depicts a police-operation in the Lager: In a small corridor several police officers are pinning down a woman on the floor, other officers are securing the site, many residents (including children) can be heard screaming.

In addition to this video our contact sent us an audio report and we have had other conversations with her about this incident. She informed us that the police had been called by another resident making a “noise complaint” due to a small party the woman in the video and her friends were having in a private room. The security guards of the Lager seemed to be surprised by the police operation - they were not informed in advance.

The police entered the Lager with seven police officers and two dogs, they knocked on the woman’s door and asked her to identify herself. She inquired, why she had to give the identification. As this information was not given to her she didn’t show her ID card. According to witnesses she was immediately grabbed and pinned down on the floor in the corridor.

People started to film and stream live. It was only when someone screamed: "See! See what they are doing to us here, they want to kill us like the other man that was killed in America." that the police officers released the women and then left the site quickly. No further measurements were taken.

Report and video can be found here:

This video and the facts revealed are deeply alarming. It raises several urgent questions:

The police officers pinned down an unarmed woman:

- What amount of force is justifiable towards unarmed women?

The police entered the Lager with seven police officers and two dogs on account of a noise complaint:

- Which measurements are justifiable on account of such a “crime”?
- What measurements are taken to bridge potential language and communication barriers with Lager residents?

The police entered the building without notifying the security guards:

- What is the role of security guards in the Lagers?

Like everywhere else, the Lager in question has health safety measurements in place due to Corona - public access and social services are limited, social distancing and wearing of face masks are obligatory.

In the video we see a clear violation of those measurements:

- Why are the police not wearing face masks and why are they not obeying to the rule of social distancing?
- What are the authorities and Lager management doing to protect their residents' health and wellbeing in times of corona?

According to the witnesses of this incident the police left the site suddenly, after realizing that they were being filmed and live streamed. No further measurements were taken and they did not press any charges. This added to the confusion of the residents as to why the police felt this show of force was necessary and justified. In the end the message they received was nothing but violence.

- Where should the women involved in this incident report their grievances with the police?

Lager residents are people who have fled war and persecution in order to find peace and protection in Germany. Here they encounter the systematic discrimination of the asylum seeking process and also police violence, this causes severe retraumatization:

- To whom should Lager residents turn when they experience this kind of retraumatization?

It seems that, in this incident, calling the police was the result of a conflict that was dormant for a very long time. In Lagers people are put together in close quarters. This is a structural problem and is a breeding ground for tensions and conflict. We and fellow groups have been informing the state institutions for a long time about this problem.

- What is being done to address these circumstances?
 - What do the authorities and Lager management do to prevent potential conflicts between Lager residents?

As the women are scared that publishing this incident might have severe consequences for their lives in Germany, we can't publish either the names of the women involved or the name of the Lager where it took place.

Please spread this statement in your media and continue your research!

We want answers to our questions!

#BlackLivesMatter #RefugeeLivesMatter

Video and a transcript of the audio report can be found here:

[iwspace.de/2020/06/in-the-shadow-of-corona-police-violence-lager-brandenburg/](https://www.iwspace.de/2020/06/in-the-shadow-of-corona-police-violence-lager-brandenburg/)

<https://youtu.be/7CMRm6l9TPc>

**(We are not revealing the name of the Lager here in order to protect the women's anonymity and also because this event is a case of structural violence, which could have happened in any Lager; if you want to investigate further, please contact us for the name of the Lager)*