

Report on anti-Muslim Racism

Short Summary



2024 Edition

ANTI-MUSLIM INCIDENTS
IN GERMANY IN 2023

Content

1. Key findings	03
1.1 Anti-Muslim incidents: key findings for 2023	03
1.2 Database	07
2. Recommendations	08

1. Key findings

1.1 Anti-Muslim incidents: key findings for 2023

Anti-Muslim racism is a form of racism that is directed against Muslims as well as all those perceived as Muslims – for example, because of their appearance, language or name. Behind every anti-Muslim discriminatory act and racist attack – whether verbally or physically – there is a personal experience of an individual, who must cope with the consequences.

These acts do not happen in isolation but are embedded in a specific socio-political context. The struggle to recognise anti-Muslim racism as a form of racism, the climate of social debates and the lack of state protection for those affected are the framework of the conditions for racism.

Human Rights Watch (HWR) also notes that the lack of understanding of anti-Muslim racism from governmental institutions and authorities, as well as the lack of official data on incidents, hinders institutional support to reach and protect those affected.¹

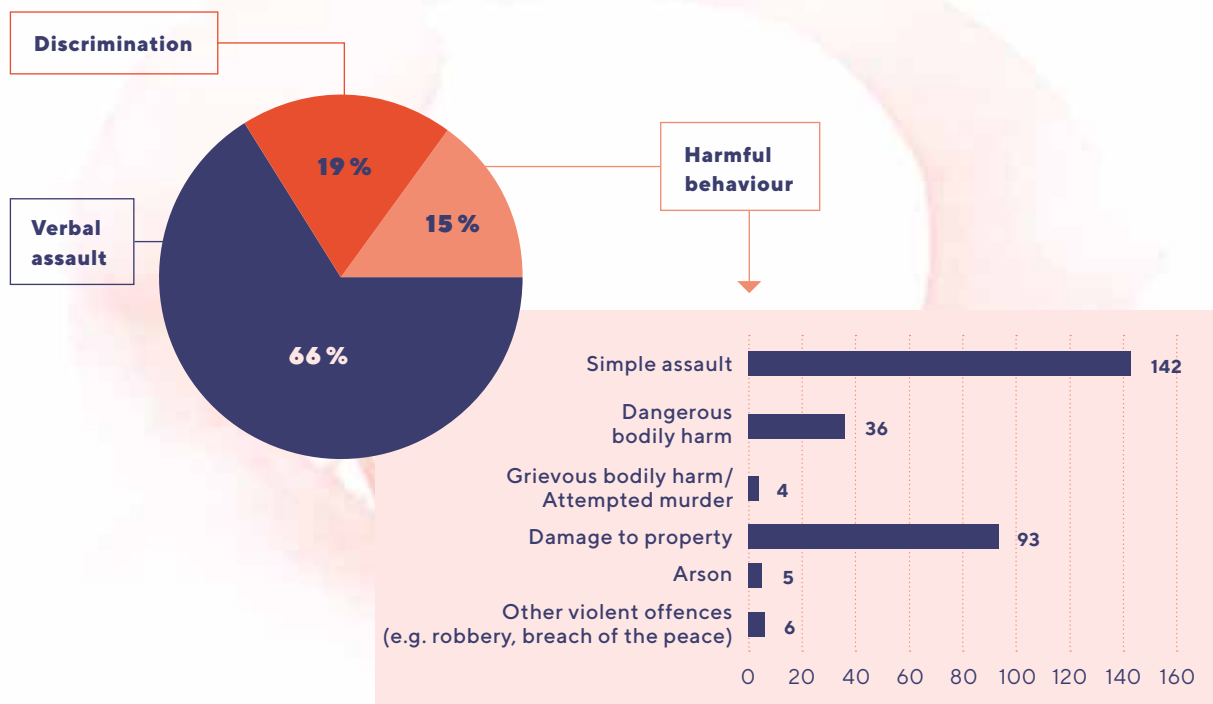
The documented cases for 2023 show that:

1. In 2023, the number of anti-Muslim incidents reached a new high of **1,926 documented cases** (2022: 898). On average, **more than five anti-Muslim incidents** took place every day in 2023 (2022: 2 cases per day), including discrimination, verbal and physical attacks, and damage to property. These included around **90 attacks on religious sites such as mosques and places perceived to be Muslim such as restaurants or shops**.
2. This is an **increase of around 114%** compared to the previous year (898 cases) – a highly alarming development. **Hate speech online** and flyers or posters with racist content **are not recorded. A high number of unreported anti-Muslim incidents can be assumed – see point 12.**
3. Anti-Muslim racism manifests itself in many ways: **implicitly** and **explicitly**, both **directly** and **institutionally**.

¹ Human Rights Watch: Germany Falling Short in Curbing Anti-Muslim Racism, [online] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/30/germany-falling-short-curbing-anti-muslim-racism> (last accessed on 29 May 2024).

- Anti-Muslim racism permeates all spheres of life, be it when looking for accommodation, visiting the doctor or at school.** A large proportion of the documented incidents mainly affect Muslim women and take place **in the education sector (21.1%)** and **in public spaces (18.9%)**. **Children are also verbally and physically attacked.** The **world of work accounts for 13.7%** of the recorded anti-Muslim incidents. **Overall, a serious number of unreported anti-Muslim incidents can be assumed.**
- Anti-Muslim attacks and discrimination have risen drastically, particularly since the terrorist attack on Israel by HAMAS on 7 October 2023.** Overall, **679 incidents** were documented in the period after **7 October to 31 December 2023.**
- Types of incidents in 2023: Verbal assaults make up the largest proportion (1,277 cases),** followed by **discrimination (363 cases)** and **harmful behaviour (286 cases).**

Figure: Anti-Muslim racism by type of incident



Types of incident N=1926, Harmful behaviour in absolute numbers N=286

7. Type of incident: verbal assaults

A breakdown of verbal attacks shows that **incitement (59.8%)** accounts for the **largest proportion** within this category, **followed by hateful insults/insults (27.6%)**.

A total of **120 threats and coercions** were recorded, which can have serious consequences for the individuals and communities affected.

Around 90 attacks on religious sites and places perceived to be Muslim were recorded. The link to antisemitism was striking. Some letters contained swastikas or references to the Nazi era. After 7 October 2023, localities that are perceived as Muslim, such as restaurants, snack bars or mosques, received h taining anti-Muslim racist comments on delivery orders.

8. Type of incident: harmful behaviour

Harmful behaviour includes violent and direct attacks above and below the threshold of criminal liability. For the year 2023, **178 bodily injuries, 4 attempted homicides, 93 damage to property, 5 arsons and 6 other acts of violence** were documented, including theft or trespassing (2022: 71 bodily injuries, 44 damage to property, 3 arsons and 49 other acts of violence).

9. The report repeatedly shows that adults attack children. As the Association of Counselling Centers for Victims of Right-wing, Racist and Antisemitic Violence in Germany (VBRG) states in its 2023 annual report, **racially motivated attacks on children and young people are on the rise for the second year in a row.**³ The documented incidents include cases in which children and young people are attacked by adults. There are also cases in which **women were attacked in the presence of children.**

10. Persons affected: The majority involved **individuals (70.4%)**, followed by **groups (17.4%)** and **religious institutions or places (10.3%)** as well as **places perceived to be Muslim such as restaurants or shops (1.9%)**. Broken down by gender, **women* are predominantly affected (62%)**, but men are more frequently affected by offensive behaviour than women*.

11. The extent and accumulation of experiences of anti-Muslim racism are further exacerbated by the intertwining of sexism, antisemitism and other racisms (including anti-Black racism and antiziganism) and misanthropic ideologies, as well as **educational, marital and migration status.**

12. A high number of unreported anti-Muslim incidents can be assumed: Due to a lack of counselling and reporting structures, a lack of trust on the part of those affected or a lack of expertise on anti-Muslim racism, a **serious number of unreported anti-Muslim incidents** can be assumed overall, i.e. cases that are not reported or recorded – this also applies to anti-Muslim hate speech online, for example on social networks.

² Correctiv Recherchen für die Gesellschaft: Faktencheck. Ja, auf Lieferando-Rechnungen standen islamfeindliche Kommentare von Kunden, [online] <https://correctiv.org/faktencheck/2023/12/08/ja-auf-lieferando-rechnungen-standen-islamfeindliche-kommentare-von-kunden/> (last accessed on 3 July 2024).

³ From the press release of the Association of Counseling Centers for Victims of Right-Wing, Racist and Antisemitic Violence (VBRG): „Aufmerksam machen möchte ich auf die erschreckende Anzahl [...] von angegriffenen Kindern und Jugendlichen“, sagt Judith Porath, Vorstandsmitglied des VBRG. „Bei dieser – aufgrund ihres Alters – sehr schutzbedürftigen Gruppe können Gewalt und Ausgrenzungserfahrungen sehr schwere Auswirkungen auf die weitere Entwicklung haben.“ (Translation: “I would like to draw attention to the alarming number [...] of children and young people who have been attacked,” says Judith Porath, board member of the VBRG. ‘Violence and experiences of exclusion can have very serious consequences for the further development of this group, which is very vulnerable due to their age.’”) As well as VBRG: Rechte, rassistische und antisemitische Gewalt in Deutschland 2023 – Jahresbilanzen der Opferberatungsstellen, 21 May 2024 [online] <https://verband-brg.de/rechte-rassistische-und-antisemitische-gewalt-in-deutschland-2023-jahresbilanzen-der-opferberatungsstellen/> (last accessed on 29 May 2024).

State underreporting of hate crime: Not all anti-Muslim offences are recognised as such because, among other things, the investigating authorities are not (yet) aware (or trained). Moreover, criminal offences are not even reported because those affected do not trust the authorities and are afraid that they will not be taken seriously.

Underreporting by civil society actors: Underreporting by civil society actors can also be assumed. It can be assumed that (i) those affected are often not reached by counselling centres and/or have no access to counselling centres and/or (ii) anti-Muslim racism is not identified in the counselling process.

A study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) states:

- Only one in 10 Muslim respondents reported a recent incident of hate-motivated harassment to the police or another organisation/agency.
- Only 4 out of 100 Muslim respondents who stated that they had been discriminated against reported this to an equality body, a human rights institution or an ombudsman organisation.⁴

For these and other reasons, the cases documented in the situation report only represent a small part of the reality of anti-Muslim racism in Germany.

The findings of the report are consistent with the results of the statistics on politically motivated crime for 2023 as well as with representative studies on anti-Muslim attitudes and experiences of discrimination:

- In 2023 alone, **1,464 Islamophobic offences** were officially recorded (politically motivated crime 2023, Federal Criminal Police Office). This marks a **140% increase compared to the previous year**, although it is likely that a significant number of cases remain unreported.⁵
- Approximately **one in two people in Germany agree with anti-Muslim statements**.⁶ Anti-Muslim resentment is present across all population groups, providing a fertile ground and gateway for right-wing ideologies. These ideologies, in turn, also reinforce antisemitism, racism against Black people and against Sinti and Roma, and contribute to discrimination against LGBTQI* individuals, people affected by poverty, people with disabilities, and women.
- According to a study by the Bertelsmann Foundation (2023), **72% of Muslims in Germany experience racist discrimination and are one of the most disadvantaged groups in Germany.**

⁴ Cf. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA): Zweite Erhebung der Europäischen Union zu Minderheiten und Diskriminierung. Muslimas und Muslime – ausgewählte Ergebnisse, 2018, p. 11.

⁵ Bundeskriminalamt / Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat: Bundesweite Fallzahlen 2023: Politisch motivierte Kriminalität, 2024, [online] https://www.bka.de/DE/Presse/Listenseite_Pressemitteilungen/2024/Presse2024/240521_PM_Fallzahlen_PMK2023.html (last accessed 29 May 2024).

⁶ Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat: Umfassende Bestandsaufnahme „Muslimfeindlichkeit in Deutschland“, [online] 2023 (zuletzt abgerufen: 04.06.2024). <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/kurzmel-dungen/DE/2023/06/dik-uem.html> (last accessed 18 July 2024).

- **Racism can also impact the risk of poverty among Muslim people, regardless of their employment status.** A study by the DeZIM Institute (2024) shows that the poverty risk rate for Muslim men and women is four times higher compared to men and women who are not racially marked. A high level of education and full-time employment do not protect against poverty, as Muslim people with a high level of education are more at risk of poverty than those who are not racially marked in Germany. Despite full-time employment, one in five Muslim individuals (self-identified) in Germany is at risk of poverty.⁷
- In a non-representative survey conducted by CLAIM in 2023, **80% of Muslim respondents, and those perceived to be Muslim**, reported experiencing **discrimination and assaults**.⁸

1.2 Database

1. **Anti-Muslim racism is a form of racism that is directed against Muslims and also against all those who could be perceived as such – for example on the basis of visible characteristics, language or name.** In terms of content, the categorisation of anti-Muslim incidents in the context of the report is based on the working definition of anti-Muslim racism recommended by the **European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)**.
2. The report includes **case numbers from 17 regional reporting and advice centres from 13 states**, nationwide **reports via the “I Report” reporting portal**, nationwide **case numbers from the 2023 statistics on politically motivated crime** as well as from police press releases and incident reports from media reports for the year 2023.
3. **Only offline incidents were recorded.** Anti-Muslim hate speech online, such as that found on social networks, could not be included in this report, despite being a prevalent form of anti-Muslim racism.
4. Cases are recorded according to **uniformed standards** and only if there is sufficient information to clearly verify the incident and eliminate the possibility of duplicate records. The documented cases include only those incidents where victims or witnesses contacted the police, reported to a reporting or counselling centre, or made the incident public, for example, online via social media or by contacting journalists.
5. When categorising a case as anti-Muslim, the **perception of those affected** is paramount. Additionally, indicators that provide insight into the motivation or nature of the offence are utilised.

⁷ Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat: Umfassende Bestandsaufnahme „Muslimfeindlichkeit in Deutschland“, [online] 2023 (zuletzt abgerufen: 04.06.2024). <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/kurzmel-dungen/DE/2023/06/dik-uem.html> (last accessed 18 July 2024).

⁸ See also: Cf. Perry, Sarah / Ipek Göcmen / Rima Hanano / Güzin Ceyhan: Erfahrungen und Umgangsstrategien von Betroffenen von antimuslimischem Rassismus. Eine explorative Studie, 2023. As well as Hyökki, Linda / Dr. Sanja Bilić / Đermana Kurić: Zivilgesellschaftliche Erfassungs- und Auswertungsverfahren zu Rassismus und Diskriminierung: Eine Kurzstudie im Auftrag von CLAIM, 2022.

2. Recommendations

The foundation for sustainable prevention and intervention measures is the systematic recording and documentation of anti-Muslim racism. Over the past two years, important groundwork for systematic civil society recording and documentation in the field of anti-Muslim racism has been established through Community-based Monitoring (CbM), which needs to be sustained.

In June 2023, the “Independent Expert Group on Anti-Muslim Sentiment” (UEM) published its final report, “Muslimfeindlichkeit – Eine deutsche Bilanz.” This report not only provides a comprehensive overview of anti-Muslim racism in Germany but also offers recommendations for action across all key societal areas to the German government. The recommendations formulated within the framework of this report complement the existing recommendations for action.

The following demands reflect concrete and key recommendations for action from the civil society counselling centres involved in this report, directed at the federal, state, and local authorities. The recommendations particularly focus on supporting those affected and on monitoring. They are not to be viewed as exhaustive but rather as a complement to existing and future recommendations, aiming to effectively combat anti-Muslim racism in all areas of life.

12 key recommendations:

- 1. The protection of racially marked individuals, including Muslims, must be comprehensively ensured by the state throughout all public spaces.**
- 2. Permanent and independent funding as well as the expansion of counselling and support structures**

The counselling and support structures for those affected by (anti-Muslim) racism must be expanded nationwide. Community-based counselling centres should be prioritised for long-term funding and expansion. Existing counselling centres need to be better tailored to support individuals affected by anti-Muslim racism, and there must be a specific investment in enhancing expertise on anti-Muslim racism. Monitoring should be recognised as a distinct task within civil society counselling work. Institutional funding at the federal and state levels is essential for monitoring at the federal, state, and municipal levels to ensure that reporting and counselling centres are equipped with the necessary personnel and financial resources in the long term.

- 3. Civil Society Monitoring of Anti-Muslim Racism**

To systematically investigate and document anti-Muslim racism, independent civil society monitoring is essential, **both online and offline.**

Offline: A uniformed, systematic, and comprehensive recording of anti-Muslim incidents enables a more precise assessment of the threat to affected communities and society as a whole. This serves as a basis for designing prevention and intervention measures. Expansion, further development, and institutionalisation of Community-based Monitoring (CbM) on federal and state levels are necessary. This includes establishing a nationwide independent information and reporting structure for anti-Muslim racism, akin to the models of the Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism (RIAS) and the “Melde- und Informationsstelle Antiziganismus (MIA)”. MIA aims to ensure consistent recording and documentation of antigypsyistic incidents by civil society throughout Germany.⁹

This structure would document incidents below and above the threshold of criminal liability, aggregate civil society case numbers, and analyse them.

Online: Comprehensive social media monitoring on anti-Muslim racism is needed to raise awareness and expose its extent online. Additionally, extensive quantitative and qualitative studies are necessary to better understand the mechanisms and motivations behind anti-Muslim racism on social media.

Complementary measures:

(i) Promotion of Counter Speech: Initiatives that develop counter speech to change narratives and strengthen affected individuals and communities should receive financial support. Community-based design, involving Muslim communities and young adults, appears essential for effectiveness.

(ii) Cooperation between Platforms, Civil Society Organisations, and Muslim Communities: Close cooperation among platforms, civil society organisations, and Muslim communities is necessary to effectively and swiftly combat anti-Muslim content online. Collaboration can enhance incident reporting, prompting platforms to take more targeted and immediate actions.

(iii) Political Measures: It is imperative for policymakers to implement laws and guidelines that draw a clear line against anti-Muslim racism on social media. Law enforcement structures must be strengthened accordingly.

4. Recognition and establishment of a standardised working definition of anti-Muslim racism as a basis for official action

Combatting anti-Muslim racism requires clarity about the phenomenon. An established and recognised working definition that comprehends anti-Muslim racism in its intersectional, institutional, and structural dimensions is therefore essential. The definition provided by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in its “General Policy Recommendation No. 5: Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims” provides the appropriate framework for this purpose. The working definition should be incorporated into administrative practices and federal programs, among other things.

⁹ Translation: Reporting and Information Centre on Antigypsyism

5. Law enforcement authorities: consistent recording and prosecution of anti-Muslim crimes and cooperation with civil society

An individual-centred approach in line with the EU Directive on Victims' Rights 2012/29/EU must be applied within police work. This aims to ensure that individuals affected are involved throughout investigations, regularly informed of progress, and supported. This helps to strengthen their trust in law enforcement authorities. Corresponding structures should be established to facilitate individuals affected in reporting anti-Muslim crimes, thereby reducing underreporting. A unified working definition and criteria catalogue for recording and documenting anti-Muslim hate crime should be established to provide a basis for assessing anti-Muslim acts. Collaboration between civil society, Muslim organisations, and security authorities in documenting anti-Muslim crimes needs improvement and should align with the key guiding principles of the European Commission. Promoting the exchange of case data between civil society and security authorities is essential to (i) obtain a more comprehensive picture of anti-Muslim incidents and (ii) identify patterns, trends, and potential risk factors early on. This enables the development of targeted prevention measures and the planning of interventions. In prosecution, offences motivated by anti-Muslim racism must be more decisively addressed by the judiciary. Mandatory training modules on anti-Muslim racism should aim to recognise anti-Muslim racism and ensure respectful and sensitive treatment of affected individuals.¹⁰

6. Anti-discrimination law: Closing loopholes and eliminating discriminatory legislation

The General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) currently does not provide a comprehensive basis to equally protect all affected individuals from discrimination. The AGG is not applicable in all areas of life, and enforcing rights is often impractical for many. Germany lags far behind other EU countries in anti-discrimination standards. The civil society coalition "AGG Reform – Now!" has developed a comprehensive supplementary list for amending the AGG. Implementing these demands will also provide better protection against discrimination and enforcement of rights for Muslims and those perceived as Muslim, particularly including: (i) clarifying the prohibition of multidimensional and intersectional discrimination, (ii) expanding the AGG's scope to cover public bodies, (iii) strengthening legal enforcement, including introducing collective redress, (iv) broadening discrimination categories, (v) extending limitation periods, (vi) expanding burden of proof reversal, and (vii) closing protection gaps in employment and private transactions.

Berlin's Neutrality Act, which prohibits teachers from wearing headscarves, among other things, should be repealed as it constitutes systematic and institutionalised discrimination against women wearing headscarves without justification. In line with rulings from the Federal Constitutional Court (2015) and the Federal Labour Court (2020), a blanket headscarf ban for teachers during lessons is impermissible.

¹⁰ The interim report of the MEGAVO police study 2023 shows that police officers are more prone to prejudiced positions towards Muslims compared to the general population. See Deutsche Hochschule der Polizei: Motivation, Einstellung und Gewalt im Alltag von Polizeivollzugsbeamten (MEGAVO), Zwischenbericht, 2023.

7. Empowerment of affected Individuals

For individuals affected by anti-Muslim racism, empowerment and educational offers are needed to promote sustainable participation and representation. Affected individuals often do not know about legal avenues available for addressing anti-Muslim discrimination and incidents, or where they can report such incidents. Furthermore, there is a need for services that facilitate peer support and awareness-raising on manifestations of anti-Muslim racism, while also educating on actions to take in case of an incident or discrimination.

8. Raising awareness of racism among authorities and (public) administration as well as in the private sector

To counter institutional anti-Muslim racism, a range of measures is necessary. Authorities and administrative bodies must develop guidelines and procedures specifically aimed at preventing anti-Muslim racism in workplaces and when accessing public services. Mandatory anti-racism training and continuing education programs need to be implemented for employees in administration and authorities (including security agencies, judiciary, education administration, healthcare system). Similarly, employers in the private sector must undergo anti-racism training and establish effective complaint mechanisms that allow individuals to report discrimination without fear of reprisals or dismissal.

9. Critical Race Education in the Context of Schools and Establishment of Complaint Structures/Options

Complaint structures/options and support services for students, teachers, and parents in cases of discrimination within the school context need to be established. These should receive complaints from affected individuals, conduct investigations, and propose binding measures and sanctions. School laws/school regulations should be reviewed from a critical race perspective to prevent the inclusion of unconstitutional regulations, such as language mandates. The issue of anti-Muslim racism must be included in school curricula and be an integral part of the training of educational professionals (including teachers, educators, and social pedagogues).

10. Anti-Racism Enhancement of the Healthcare System

To ensure adequate medical care for those affected by discrimination, it is crucial to take action on various levels. This includes critical race training for healthcare professionals to appropriately address racism both individually and institutionally, as well as to strengthen patient rights. Measures should also aim to promote diversity and inclusion in healthcare, such as increasing the representation of racialized and marginalised groups in medical specialties. The existing body of research on the extent and consequences of racism in healthcare is still limited, highlighting the need to enhance research that systematically captures racism. Only through comprehensive data analysis can racial disparities in healthcare be identified and targeted solutions developed.

11. Sensitisation and Information

In addition to expanding advisory, reporting, and support structures, information services are essential for individuals affected by racist and specifically anti-Muslim attacks, to make support structures more accessible and facilitate access to advisory services. The National Discrimination and Racism Monitor 2022 also indicates that the majority society recognises racism directed against Muslims far less frequently. Measures must be implemented regularly with the aim of continuously sensitising the general public to anti-Muslim racism, informing them about it, and raising awareness of the issue.

12. Appointment of an Expert Council and a Federal Commissioner for Combating Anti-Muslim Racism

The establishment of a broadly competent Expert Council and the appointment of a Federal Commissioner for Combating Anti-Muslim Racism are necessary. The Expert Council is tasked with collaborating with the Federal Commissioner, advising them, and independently and regularly informing the public.

Impressum

Publishers:

CLAIM – Alliance Against Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hate in cooperation with
ZEOK e.V. as part of the Competence Network on Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Racism
Friedrichstraße 206
10969 Berlin
presse@claim-allianz.de
www.claim-allianz.de

ZEOK e. V.
Kurt-Eisner-Str. 68 HH
04275 Leipzig

Responsible Party:

CLAIM – Allianz gegen Islam- und Muslimfeindlichkeit
Rima Hanano

Supporting Association CLAIM: Teilseiend e.V.
Registered Office: Heidelberg
Executive Director: Yasemin Soylu
Mannheim District Court, Registration Number: VR 700738

Report Project Team: Rima Hanano, Güzin Ceyhan, Elisabeth Walser, Birte Freer

Editorial Team: Güzin Ceyhan, Birte Freer, Rima Hanano, Elisabeth Walser

Contributors: Barbara Singh, Arash Bakhtiari und Wida Faizi

Editing: Supertext

Translation: Nicole Nöbauer

Design: neonfisch.de

Printing: H. Heenemann GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin

The publications do not reflect the opinions of the BMFSFJ or the BAFzA.
The authors are responsible for the content.

Publication Date: July 2024

© CLAIM, 2024 – All rights reserved.



A publication within the framework of the Competence Network Islamophobia and Antimuslim hatred

Funded by

Within the framework of the Federal Programme

