



UNIVERSITY OF HAMBURG

**European Master's Programme in Human Rights and
Democratisation
A.Y. 2025/2026**

SECURITIZATION PRACTICES IN GERMAN MIGRATION LAW AND POLICY

The Impact on Iraqi Yazidis and Russian Nationals Communities

Author: Chiara Luccioli

Supervisor: Prof. Markus Kotzur

Word Count Declaration: 28,643

Acknowledgements

For this work, I would like to thank my supervisor at my second-semester university, the University of Hamburg, Professor Kotzur, for his guidance and helpful feedbacks on the structure and development of this thesis; I would also like to thank Professor Sözen, for her advice and support during this process. I am also especially grateful to the interviewees who dedicated their time and shared their views and expertise with me, and whose trust made this research possible: Mr. Thikran Mato, director of the art exhibition and initiative *Nobody's Listening*; Mr. Walad Kiret, board member of the *Yazidische Jugend Deutschland*; Dr. Katerina Kratzmann, cluster coordinator for governance, peacebuilding and climate change at the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Iraq; and to Mr. “M.”, citizen of the Russian Federation residing in Munich, who wished to remain anonymous, but whose participation was equally fundamental. I here also the use of artificial intelligence-based tools (Claude and Transkriptor) for editing bibliographic citation formatting and interview transcriptions. Finally, I sincerely want to thank my family and my friends, for their continuous support, encouragement and kindness shown to me throughout this year.

Abstract

This research thesis analyses the process of securitization of migration in Germany, whether it operates uniformly across the groups it affects, or whether it is implemented in different mechanisms and has then different consequences, depending on the community involved. Drawing on securitization theory, the study puts Germany's migration governance inside the legal framework of the European Union and of International Human Rights Law, before introducing two original case studies: citizens of the Russian Federation residing in Munich, subject to mandatory security interviews since 2025, and the Iraqi Yazidis, whose 2014 genocide formally recognised by Germany in 2023, and yet continue to face incumbent threats of deportations. Combining semi-structured interviews, original anonymous surveys and analysis of primary legal sources and secondary academic literature, the research finds that the two communities experience securitization through different logics: for Russian nationals is a preventive, administrative one, while for Yazidis it occurs through the enforcement measure of deportations and through the bureaucratic process of protection withdrawal, occurring despite the state's own public humanitarian recognition of the genocide. These findings suggest that securitization practices in Germany are not a single, unified set of measures, but distinct administrative and enforcement logics, with implementation effects that often vary, depending on a community's legal status, their political position at the international level and how that community is discussed publicly in Germany. Finally, the research concludes with some practical recommendations concerning procedural transparency, judicial safeguards and consistent humanitarian protection, and acknowledging the limitations of its small-sample empirical design and suggestions for future research in this domain.

Table of Contents

Methodology Introduction

1. Migration and Political Narratives: Reflections in The Legal Framework and Policy Application

1.1 Migration to Europe: Political Narratives and Securitization Measures

1.1.1 Migration in European Liberal Democracies: a threat to the Nation-State?

1.2 European Union Migration Law and Policy Framework

1.2.1 European Legal Typology of Migration and EU Competences

1.2.2 Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and Asylum Procedures

Directive

1.2.3 Externalization Practices and Cooperation with Third Countries

1.2.4 Recent Developments of 2026: Pact on Migration, Return Regulation and Third-Country Hubs

1.3 German Migration and Security Policies

1.3.1 National Asylum and Residence Law

1.3.2 Skilled Immigration Act and Asylum Seekers Benefits

1.3.3 Security Packages and Administrative Measures

1.3.4 Enforcement Measures: Deportations and Return Policies

1.4 Legal Protections and Human Rights Safeguards for Migrants

1.4.1 International Human Rights Law (UDHR, ICCPR, ICESCR)

1.4.2 The 1951 Refugee Convention and the *Non-Refoulement* Principle

1.4.3 European Human Rights Law: the EU Charter and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

2. Case Study I: Russian Nationals in Munich

- 2.1 Geopolitical and Security Context (Post-2022)
- 2.2 Securitization and Political Concerns on Russian Nationals Presence in Germany
- 2.3 Administrative Measures: the Security Interviews
 - 2.3.1 Impact on Human Rights Protections and Human Security Perceptions
 - 2.3.2 Safety and Trust in Institutions
 - 2.3.3 Access to Services and Social Inclusion
 - 2.3.4 Experiences of Discrimination

3. Case Study II: Iraqi Yazidi Community in Germany

- 3.1. Historical and Political Background: The Iraqi Yazidi Diaspora in Germany (Post-2014)
 - 3.1.1 The Geopolitical Instability in Contemporary Iraq
 - 3.1.2 A Slow Recovery: The Humanitarian Crisis in Sinjar
 - 3.1.3 Development Cooperation Perspectives: GIZ Iraq on Return, Fragmentation, and The Erosion of the Human Rights Frame
- 3.2 Migration Governance and Enforcement Policies
 - 3.2.1 Statutory Frameworks, International Protections for Vulnerable Groups and the Contradictions of Forced Repatriations
 - 3.2.2 The 2025 Brandenburg Precedent and Procedural Irregularities:
 - 3.2.3 External Stabilization vs Internal Exclusion: The Federal Strategy
- 3.3 Impact on Human Rights Protections and Human Security Perceptions
 - 3.3.1 Memory, Identity and Integration in Germany
 - 3.3.2 Institutional Trust and Procedural Fairness
 - 3.3.3 Social Inclusion and Access To Resources

4. Analysis of Findings

- 4.1 Comparing Logics of Securitization
 - 4.1.1 Administrative vs Enforcement Measures
 - 4.1.2 Political Discourses and Community-Specific Policies
- 4.2 Differential Impacts on Human Rights Protections
- 4.3 Human Security Perceptions across Groups

Conclusion

Bibliography

Appendices

Appendix A

Appendix B

Methodology

This thesis uses a comparative, qualitative case study design, built around two migrant communities in Germany: Russian nationals in Munich and the Iraqi Yazidi community, chosen precisely because they occupy different positions within Germany's current migration and security landscape. Chapter 1 was built through research into the relevant EU and German legal and policy framework, drawing on official sources (European Commission, EUR-Lex, the European Union Agency for Asylum, the German Federal Foreign Office and Federal Ministry of the Interior), academic literature and news reporting. Chapters 2 and 3, the two case studies, are built primarily on original primary data: semi-structured interviews, an anonymous online survey for each community, and, in the Russian case, an official administrative letter shared directly by the interviewee. Chapter 4 then brings the two case studies into comparison for analysis.

Four semi-structured interviews were conducted for this research. The first was with a Russian national living in Munich, referred to throughout this thesis as "M." at his own request, conducted in Russian over a video call and later translated into English for use in this thesis. The second and third were with Walad Kiret, a board member of the North Rhine-Westphalia branch of the *Yazidische Jugend Deutschland* (Yazidi Youth Germany), and Thikran Mato, director of the *Nobody's Listening* initiative and a survivor of the 2014 Yazidi genocide, both conducted in English and both agreeing openly to be named. The fourth was with Dr. Katerina Kratzmann, a cluster coordinator at GIZ Iraq, conducted over Microsoft Teams while she was posted in Iraq, which provided a practitioner's perspective on returns and reintegration, and on the general development-cooperation context discussed in Chapter 3.

All interviews followed a semi-structured format: a set of open questions, adapted as the conversation developed. Alongside the interviews, two anonymous online Google Forms surveys were distributed through Telegram groups (for Russians) and through the connections established with the interviewees and on Instagram (for the Iraqi Yazidi): one to self-identified Russian Federation nationals living in Munich (N=11, nine questions), and

one to self-identified members of the Yazidi community in Germany (N=7, six questions), both covering perceptions of safety, institutional trust, discrimination, and access to services. Survey responses were processed as simple descriptive statistics (percentages of yes/no answers across each question), which are reported throughout the case study chapters and synthesised comparatively in Chapter 4.

All interviewees gave informed, verbal or written consent to be recorded and quoted and only M. asked to be anonymous; M. is referred to as such throughout this thesis. Kiret, Mato and Kratzmann all agreed to be identified by name. Both surveys were fully anonymous by design: no email addresses, names, or IP-identifying information were collected, and the surveys were framed as voluntary and unconnected to any official process.

Regarding the recruitment of interviewees, for Russian respondents for the survey this required contacting Russian-language Telegram groups used by Munich's Russian-speaking community, and the response from several group members and administrators was not what I expected. More than once, I was directly asked whether I was working for, or connected to, the Russian Federation government or, in one case, suspected of being some kind of informant gathering information on the community for the Russian authorities.

On a later reflection, though, the suspicion made a certain amount of sense, and it connects directly to the subject matter of this thesis. This research was, quite literally, asking Russian nationals in Munich about their encounters with German security screening, in a period when real espionage cases involving people embedded in ordinary-looking cultural or community spaces had been prosecuted in Germany, including a case in which the accused had used a cultural association as cover (Thurau, 2026). In that context, a stranger asking pointed questions about security procedures, in Russian, was not an unreasonable thing to be wary of. I also think that my decision to communicate in Russian, made with the intention of lowering the cultural and language barrier to participation and show a signal of good faith, may have had the opposite effect for some people: fluent, targeted outreach in Russian, on exactly this topic, can look a lot like the kind of soft information-gathering that, according to my own sources, has actually happened. I do not think this suspicion was irrational, and I believe it to be a small, first-hand demonstration of exactly the climate of generalized

wariness that this thesis argues has been produced around Russian nationality in Germany since 2022. It is worth naming as a finding in its own.

The practical consequence was that recruitment took longer, and required much more reassurance than initially planned, as I had to explain, repeatedly and in different words, that the survey was academic, voluntary, and fully anonymous, and in at least two cases this was not enough on its own: Telegram group administrators asked me to send screenshots of the Google Forms settings page, showing that email collection was switched off and that no identifying data was being gathered, before they were willing to share the link with their members. Only after providing that evidence did the survey start circulating more freely on their networks. It is also worth noting that M. was the only interviewee, across all four, who asked to remain anonymous, a choice that fits the same pattern: he is currently on an active residence procedure process with German authorities to obtain it, and understandably he did not want his name publicly attached to commentary on German security policy while that is ongoing.

The experience of approaching Yazidi interviewees was, in almost every respect, quite the opposite. Both Kiret and Mato responded quickly, warmly, and with what came across as genuine enthusiasm that a piece of academic research wanted to hear directly from them, rather than about them, and neither of them asked to be anonymous.

I think it also explains why the response to being interviewed was so different from the Russian case: a great deal has been written about the Yazidi genocide, by journalists, NGOs, and academics, but comparatively little of it involves sitting down with individual Yazidis and asking them how they experience their own present, everyday life in Germany, their politics, their sense of discrimination or safety, rather than only their history as genocide survivors. Kiret's own account of the community's post-2014 experiences, from actively hiding their Yazidi identity to having to publicly claim it once the genocide made global headlines, suggests that visibility itself has become something the community has learned to use, cautiously but deliberately for their recognition and legitimacy, rather than as a risk to be avoided. Being asked, by name, to speak about their own experience, fit somehow naturally into that ongoing project, in a way that being anonymously surveyed about a security procedure clearly did not for many Russian respondents.

Introduction

In October 2025, the German Chancellor stood up in public and said that Germans were “afraid to move around in public spaces” because of migration, and that the “cityscape” of German towns needed to change (Deutschlandfunk, 2025; Thureau, 2025). A few months earlier, in Munich, a Russian national going through an ordinary residence permit renewal was told he first had to sit through a security interview, a screening that did not exist for people of his nationality before the war of aggression against Ukraine started (Serdiukov, 2025). Two years before that, the German *Bundestag* had voted to formally recognize the 2014 Islamic State campaign against the Yazidis as a genocide, only for German states to start deporting Yazidi families back to Iraq, just a few months later (Deutscher Bundestag, 2023; PRO ASYL, 2023). These three moments, on the surface, can look unrelated. However, this thesis argues that they are not: they are three different expressions of the same, underlying process: the securitization of migration in Germany, and understanding how that process actually works, on the ground, for the real people involved in it and affected by it, is what this research sets out to do.

This thesis looks at how migration governance in Germany has become interlinked with questions of security, and it does so through two case studies that sit, in many ways, at opposite ends of the same spectrum. Migration has always been a socially and politically charged topic (de Haas et al., 2020), but what makes the current moment worth studying closely is exactly the specific way in which security instruments have become normal, everyday tools of migration governance, rather than just exceptional emergency measures.

The rationale for pairing these two specific case studies is precisely that, because they do not fit in the same story: Russians in Germany were not, historically, a securitized group, and they suddenly became one after February 2022, for reasons that have nothing to do with their own individual conduct and everything to do with the actions of a state they may have left behind, be even openly critical of, or have no political connection to it at all. Yazidis, by contrast, are a community that Germany has officially recognized as genocide victims, and

one that, according to interviewees in this research, generally enjoys sympathetic treatment from German politicians. And yet it is this second group, not the first, that faces the harder edge of German migration enforcement: actual deportations, including of children who grew up entirely in the German school system. Putting these two cases side by side is what allows this thesis to ask a proper comparative question, instead of assuming that securitization always looks the same, or always targets the same groups that are talked about negatively in the news for the same underlying reasons.

The central question guiding this research is: how does the securitization of migration in Germany operate differently across different migrant communities, and what does this reveal about the relationship between political discourse, administrative practice, and the lived experience of security? This overarching question is broken down into four sub-research questions: (1) what distinguishes administrative, gatekeeping forms of securitization from enforcement and removal forms, and how does each apply to the two communities studied here, (2) how does public political discourse about each community relate, or fail to relate, to the concrete policy measures actually applied to them, (3) what are the differential impacts of these measures on formal human rights protections, under both international and German domestic law, and (4) how do these dynamics translate into people's own perceptions of safety, institutional trust, and security.

Two working hypotheses guided the design of the empirical chapters: firstly (H1), that securitization was not expected to look the same for both groups. Given Russia's role as a geopolitical actor that Germany sees now as hostile, and the Yazidi community's status as an already integrated population, the hypothesis was that Russians would experience securitization mainly as a preventive, administrative measure attached to the point of renewing or extending legal status, while Yazidis would experience it mainly as an enforcement measure aimed at people already settled in the country. Secondly (H2), the favourable political discourses about a certain community were not expected to necessarily predict a better treatment, given that bureaucratic and enforcement practice often follow their own logic, independently of political sympathy (Bigo, 2002).

This thesis relies primarily on securitization theory, drawing on both the Copenhagen School (Wæver, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998) and the Paris School (Bigo, 2002). The Copenhagen

School is useful for understanding migration as something that gets turned into a security issue through specific speech acts, political statements, legislative announcements, that frame it as an existential threat requiring extraordinary measures. The Paris School complements this by looking past the speeches, at the intrinsic, everyday routine practices that normalise the association between migration and danger. Williams' (2011) concept of the "liberalism of fear" adds another layer, treating fear not as something abnormal that liberal societies must eliminate, but as a normal part of political life that needs to be managed responsibly rather than exploited. Brubaker's (2017) account of "protectionist populism" helps explain why migration, more than almost any other policy area, becomes such fertile ground for this kind of politics, and de Haas et al.'s (2020) study of migration as a long-running social process, rather than something that can be switched on and off through policy, underpins the thesis' skepticism towards purely reactive, governance driven by crises. Finally, the concept of human security, understood broadly as encompassing Roosevelt's four freedoms, provides the analytical bridge in Chapter 4 between formal legal protections and the lived, felt experience captured through interviews and surveys.

The existing literature this thesis draws on falls into four sections. The first covers European Union and German migration law and policy, including accounts of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), its reform, and Germany's own domestic legal architecture (Uçarer, 2013; Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019; Niemann & Zaun, 2023). The second covers the securitization of migration literature, both the theoretical Copenhagen/Paris School debate and empirical work on how it plays out in specific European contexts (Ceccorulli, 2018; Grappi & Lucarelli, 2021). The third covers the Yazidi genocide and diaspora specifically, including work on Yazidi identity, history, and displacement (Asatryan & Arakalova, 2002; Barir, 2014; Cheterian, 2019; Shende, 2021). The fourth covers Russia's use of diaspora communities and hybrid tactics in Europe, including older but still relevant work on disinformation campaigns (Gressel, 2016) and more recent reporting on espionage and sabotage cases connected to Russian intelligence services (Connolly, 2025; Connor, 2026; Thureau, 2026).

What is missing from this literature, and what this thesis tries to contribute to, is a direct, empirical comparison of how securitization plays out across two different communities

within the same national context, built on primary qualitative data rather than only legal text or media discourse analysis. This thesis tries to close part of that gap by going directly to members of both communities, through interviews and anonymous surveys, rather than relying solely on official documents, NGO reports, or media coverage.

Geographically, this thesis focuses on Germany, with the Russian case study (centered specifically on Munich, where the analysed securitization practice is only being implemented at the moment), and the Yazidi case study is across Germany, given the more dispersed nature of that community's settlement pattern and the federal enforcement of remigration policies. Temporally, the research concentrates on the period from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 through mid-2026, a window that includes both Germany's own domestic policy shifts and the European Union's reform of the Common European Asylum System, whose main provisions only became applicable from June and July 2026, so right around the time this research was being finalized.

The significance of this timing is not incidental. This thesis is being written at the exact moment Germany is transposing new European asylum framework into domestic law, while simultaneously navigating a hardening domestic political climate around migration, a moment when both the law and the everyday administrative practice around it are changing. Its contribution lies in bringing together three things: a grounding in the relevant legal and policy framework, a comparative empirical case study design built on original interviews and survey data from two very differently positioned migrant communities, and a reflection on what it is actually like, methodologically, to go and ask people from securitized communities about their own experience of being securitized

1. Migration and Political Narratives: Reflections in the Legal Framework and Policy Application

In today's world, migration remains one of the most discussed political, legal and social issues around the globe, a feature which heavily characterizes political narratives, legal frameworks and directions of policy making in any state, big or small, in liberal democracies and authoritarian states, in the East and in the West, affecting the lives of millions.

The effects of going through a migration process, from start to end, can vary extensively based on the individual experience, the motives for migrating and what happens in the aftermath, bringing both hopes for a better future as well as fear for unexpected, serious traumas, uncertainties and insecurities (de Haas et al., 2020). In receiving societies, migration can be equally met with ambiguity: throughout the course of history, settler societies, nascent empires and growing economies have generally welcomed immigrants, as they fill labor shortages, boost population growth and help businesses and trade. However, particularly in times of economic crisis and conflict, which can shake societal stability and general well-being, immigrants are often the first to be blamed for problems (de Haas et al., 2020), being scapegoated, sometimes ostracized and suspected of conspiring to obstruct the country's overall security, wealth and development.

In today's contemporary societies, migration and the resulting diversity are amongst the most emotive subjects: while the global phenomena rates have remained relatively stable over the past half a century, the political salience around migration topics has increased, and for destination societies, the arrival of migrant groups can fundamentally change their fabric in the longer run (de Haas et al., 2020) and consequently shape the governance of said field. Within this context, understanding how migration is defined, categorized, and securitized becomes essential, for analyzing both European legal frameworks and contemporary policy applications.

1.1 Migration to Europe: Political Narratives and Securitization Measures

Throughout Europe's integration process., migration has been a constant element, with flows and origins changing with the times. After World War II, 11 million refugees were already on the continent, soon followed by other waves, driven by the decolonization process (Laschi, 2021). However, in the early decades, the European Union's (EU) primary role in migration policy remained quite minimal, with member states retaining distinct national approaches to it. In those years, as European workers were moving freely within the Community, the decolonisation simultaneously triggered those external migration flows that started to touch gradually all member states, and subsequently challenged traditional notions of borders. In the following decades, large arrivals often caused defensive reactions, calls to close borders and to protect the local identity, thus complicating all integration efforts (Laschi, 2021). A large part of the political problems surrounding migration stems from policymakers' failure to understand it as a social process, with its own logic, rather than a simple economic response that can be switched on and off through policy changes based on the market's needs, and in reality, migration lasts far longer after the original economic conditions that triggered it have already changed (de Haas et al., 2020).

Migration is also a deeply politically divisive topic nowadays, and has become tied to security fears, moving way past economic grievances (de Haas et al., 2020). But how did such a political environment come to be in these specific historical times? While intra-EU mobility had previously been a relative success, the EU grew increasingly focused on curbing arrivals from third countries, torn between labour needs and integration costs. By the 1980s, more restrictive policies were being adopted at both national and European levels, and the EU's failure to adequately manage large-scale flows, particularly during the Arab Spring and Syrian war, deepened public intolerance, a sentiment actively exploited by political parties and governments alike (Laschi, 2021).

From the 1990s, the European politics saw a surge of what Brubaker defined as 'protectionist populism', where migration is considered a central, but multi-dimensional factor, in the rise of contemporary populism in Europe, both as a long-term, structural condition, as well as a cultural/symbolic resource, and finally as an immediate political and social trigger (Brubaker, 2017). In 1990, the numbers of international migrants were estimated at 154 million: in 2024, the figures have nearly doubled, reaching 304 millions of international migrants worldwide,

according to the most recent United Nations estimate of 2024 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2024).

At the structural level, large-scale immigration over recent decades is described as having transformed European societies by increasing ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity and by reshaping the labour markets and urban societies (Brubaker, 2017). This transformation is not treated as causal, but rather as creating the social conditions that make it possible to reframe politics in binary and more polarized terms, especially through oppositions between “the people” and immigrants, or between the native, local majorities and the “outsiders” (Brubaker, 2017).

Migration is then placed as an important element of “protectionist populism”: namely, a political logic based on the defence of jobs, welfare systems, cultural identity and national sovereignty against the perceived external threats (Brubaker, 2017). On a wider scale then, migration raises questions of identity and sovereignty in European countries, which is exactly why it generates such strong reactions. Yet, as migrants start to settle and economies become more and more dependent on their labour force, integration becomes, at a certain point, unavoidable: in countries where host societies are inclusive, integration tends to succeed across generations, but where they are not, marginalised ethnic minorities are created, ironically producing the very effects of social tensions that migration opponents so badly feared (de Haas et al., 2020).

With this in mind, a key element in this discourse as theorized by Williams (2011) is, indeed, fear: more specifically also, how fear is not only an instrument of securitizing states, but how it can also play a role in countering their expansion and keep in check their politics of security. Although securitization theory rarely uses the word “fear” directly, preferring terms like existential threat or emergency, fear is actually built into its underlying logic. Whenever something is framed as a security issue, the implicit message is that something valued is at risk of being lost: one's life, identity, social order, or way of life (Williams, 2011). That said, Williams also says that the “liberalism of fear” should not simply be a description of how liberal societies actually work, but it can be both a philosophical framework, helping people think clearly and act wisely, as well as a practical tool for understanding how security works in liberal politics and to give some useful principles for thinking about what responsible

and more humane politics of security might look like (Williams, 2011). The liberalism of fear disagrees with the vision that treat fear and emergency as the opposite of normal liberal life, or as the hidden force that keeps liberal societies from falling apart and does not see fear as something to be eliminated or kept at a safe distance: experiencing fear is simply part of the human experience, it warns us of danger and helps us survive (Williams, 2011). More than that, a certain amount of fear, reckons Williams, is necessary to keep a liberal society functioning. This is because the fear in question is not a generalised anxiety, but a specific fear of cruelty and the arbitrary exercise of power, drawing on Shklar's foundational account (Williams, 2011), and it is precisely this fear that motivates the citizens to support and defend the institutional constraints such the rule of law, the separation of powers and the upholding and protection of their rights that keep the power in check (Williams, 2011). Without it, the defense mechanisms against possible abuses of power would weaken, and with it the very own safeguards that make a society liberal in the first place (Williams, 2011).

The lenses used here and used traditionally in securitization theory for analysing the European migration policy and its legal framework are the concepts put forward by the Copenhagen School and the Paris School. From a Copenhagen School perspective (Wæver, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998), migration has repeatedly been framed as an existential threat to European identity, social cohesion, and public order, a securitizing move that has justified extraordinary legislative measures, such as the reinforcement of Frontex, the externalisation of border controls, or the adoption of emergency provisions under the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Labelling something a security matter is, for the Copenhagen School, an inherently political gesture, and one that carries real risks. Stepping outside the boundaries of ordinary politics opens the door to extreme and sometimes unpredictable outcomes, which is why such moves require a careful process of scrutiny (Williams, 2011).

The Paris School (Bigo, 2002) complements this by shifting the attention to the everyday practices through which migration is securitized on the ground, so the routine work of border guards, the detention centres, the new surveillance technologies, and the bureaucratic procedures that tend to normalize the treatment of migrants as a security risk. Both perspectives help explain how European migration law and policy has changed from a humanitarian and rights-based framework towards one driven by security concerns more and more, a tension visible in instruments like the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, adopted in

2024 and implemented from this year (2026).

In our contemporary society and political environment, migration is no longer portrayed as just one of the many policy issues among the others, but becomes the symbol of a much bigger narrative, where other elements such as globalisation, a neo-liberal economic system and cultural liberalisation are all seen as being imposed by some distant, detached *élites* at the expense of the “lower-class”, “ordinary people.” (Brubaker, 2017). Even though evidence shows that migrants generally benefit economies through growth and innovation, these gains are unevenly shared in the society: businesses and higher-income groups profit the most out of them, while lower-income populations bear the rest of the social cost, with few direct economic benefits (de Haas et al., 2020).

These dynamics have fueled the rise of anti-immigrant parties across Europe which have pushed the entire political spectrum by pressuring established parties to adopt tougher positions on migration and diversity and has intensified significantly in the context of the 2015 refugee crisis, as a decisive moment in the activation of populist narratives across Europe (Brubaker, 2017, de Haas et al., 2020). The so-called “migrant crisis” of 2015 in Europe represented a turning point in the Union political discourse, when more than a million migrants and refugees crossed into Europe in 2015, sparking a crisis as countries struggled to cope with the influx, and creating division in the EU over how best to deal with resettling people (BBC News, 2016). Although the actual scale of arrivals was limited in proportional terms, the crisis acquired its political force through its representation as an uncontrolled and exceptional flow of people (Brubaker, 2017).

In this sense, the refugee flow is not simply described as an empirical event, but a discourse through which migration is transformed into a symbol of systemic failure and as a starting point for Euroscepticism and mobilisations for reclaiming an apparent sovereignty, particularly for what it concerns EU border governance, asylum management and encouraging debates on European integration (Brubaker, 2017). The strain on Schengen and Dublin arrangements reinforced the perception that supranational institutions are incapable of controlling territorial boundaries, later strengthening claims that sovereignty must be re-nationalised, as EU-level governance is portrayed as facilitating policies of open borders and limiting national control over immigration policy (Brubaker, 2017).

This process can be understood through the studies of narrative as a way of meaning-making

in legal and political discourse: scholars argue, that narratives do not merely describe events, but actively construct the categories through which we interpret them, organising disparate facts into coherent and persuasive accounts of reality (Amsterdam & Bruner, 2000; Todorov, 1977). Specifically, in legal and political contexts, such narratives carry particular power because they form whose experiences are recognised, whose claims are legitimised, and whose threats are taken seriously (Bell, 1999). Within this framework, it is visible how migration is further politicised through its connection with Islam and security issues, particularly in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in various European cities (Brubaker, 2017). In this narrative, refugee movements, Muslim identity, and Islamist violence are taken as parts of a single thread of threats, with this connection being a central topic for far-right, populist mobilisation, as it allows for the unification of distinct phenomena as humanitarian migration flows, religious identity, and isolated acts of terrorism, into a single representation of overall danger: the migrants (Brubaker, 2017). As a result, migration becomes not only a question of border management or demographic change but, as a proper existential issue, a matter of life and death, of “us versus them”, revolving around cultural survival and public security (Brubaker, 2017).

This makes migrants an easy scapegoat for politicians seeking to mobilise discontent, and while concerns about extremism involving small minorities of immigrant populations have some basis, these are frequently blown out of proportion to portray migrants as cultural invaders, or even as criminals, a rhetoric that has made far-right, populist violent narratives to spread all across Europe (de Haas et al., 2020). According to Brubaker then, migration cannot be seen as a singular determining factor, but as a politically constructed and re-activated issue that gains salience over and over through its interaction with structural socio-political and economic transformations and their systemic crises (Brubaker, 2017). It is, in fact, politically significant precisely because it can be instrumentalized and linked to various problems in time: economic insecurity, cultural change, institutional distrust, and security fears, thus becoming one of the principal tools through which contemporary populist narratives are proposed and legitimized (Brubaker, 2017).

In contemporary European politics, Merz's statements of October 2025 give a real example of how discourses around migration gets securitized, by linking what he called “problems in the cityscape” (‘Stadtbild’) to migration and deportations (Deutschlandfunk, 2025; Thureau,

2025). The term itself, 'Stadtbild', or cityscape, had already been circulating in conservative and far-right discourses, also notably used by Markus Söder, the Bavarian Minister-President and leader of the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU), the sister party of Bavaria of Merz's party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) weeks earlier. Interviewed in September 2025 by the *Münchner Merkur*, he said that the cityscape "must change again" and that more repatriations were needed, including of non-criminal Syrians and Afghans, as in his words "who should rebuild Syria, if not their own citizens?" (Schier & Deutschländer, 2025). The gravity of Merz's use of the term lies in the institutional authority behind it: this was no longer opposition rhetoric, or regional populism, but a statement by a sitting federal chancellor, made in an official capacity (Grasnick, 2025). In October 2025, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz claimed that Germans and Europeans were "afraid to move around in public spaces", as a result of the irregular migration (Thurau, 2025). Specifically, he pointed to migrants without permanent residence permits who do not work and do not abide by the law, arguing that "many of them determine the public image" of German cities, including areas around railway stations, underground trains and parks (Deutschlandfunk, 2025).

In the Copenhagen School terms and thinking, this is a classic securitizing move: by framing migration as a threat to the safety and as a character of everyday urban life, Merz aims to justify a toughening and straitening of proper policy responses. He called for large-scale deportations, triggering immediate backlash from rival politicians, protests in Berlin, and dissent within his own party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) (Thurau, 2025). Another exemplary element was also Merz's deliberate use of fear based on gender, represented with the specific mention of daughters' security, to justify his remarks: when asked whether he would retract his statements, he replied that those people with children should "ask your daughters" what he meant, implying that women and girls are the primary victims of migrant violence in public spaces "once it gets dark, if not before" (Thurau, 2025). This rhetorical move is precisely what the Copenhagen School identifies as a speech act: exploiting gendered fear to legitimize securitizing policies about migration, as fear is channeled and amplified, to justify the use of extraordinary measures. The Paris School approach is relevant here as well: Merz's rhetoric did not come out of the blue without any prior basis but is part of a narrative built on years of routine security practices, border controls, deportation procedures, police profiling, all norms and policies that had already

contributed to normalised the unfortunate association, that migration equals danger.

Later, Merz's comments triggered widespread protests, with thousands marching in Berlin under the slogan "We are the cityscape", and a petition titled "We are the Daughters", explicitly refusing Merz's use of women as a political and securitizing tool, gathering nearly 200,000 signatures within just a few days (Thurau, 2025). Critics, including vice Chancellor Lars Klingbeil, warned against dividing people into another classic rhetoric of "us" and "them", stating "I would like to live in a country in which politics builds bridges and brings society together, rather than dividing with language" (Jones et al., 2025). This episode in Germany is not an isolated controversy, but demonstrates the existence of a pattern all across European liberal democracies, where migration is increasingly framed not merely as a policy challenge but as an existential threat to national identity and security.

1.1.1 Migration in European Liberal Democracies: a Threat to the Nation-State?

In 2026, several debates around migration topics in Europe continue to be part of electoral campaigns and political discussions forming and testing the public opinion, the consequent legal reforms and the security policies, which are being adopted widely across the European Union and its member states. It is a phenomenon that has, undoubtedly, moved way beyond the mere humanitarian and socio-economic sphere, to become now also associated with questions of national security, border management, identity and social integration. Among the eight regions of the world as divided by the UN analysis, between 1990 and 2024 in Europe there was a significant rise of 43 million between 1990 and 2024 in the number of international migrants, with Germany being the first leading destination of the area with 16.8 million (and second worldwide, preceded only by the United States of America) (UN DESA, 2024).

In 2015, the turning point in the European migration policy framework, 1.255,600 first time asylum seekers applied for international protection in the member states of the EU, a number more than double that of the previous year (Eurostat, 2016) and, although not all of those arriving in Europe choose to claim asylum, many do, and the member state to receive the highest number was Germany ((BBC News, 2016). In fact, according to the statistics of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (2016), the year of 2015 was particularly

characterized by the high immigration of persons seeking international protection: in the reporting period of 2015, 476,649 asylum applications (first and follow-up applications) were registered (compared to 202,834 in 2014) representing an increase of 135% in numbers compared to the previous year. In the federal quota system (*Erstverteilung von Asylbegehrenden* [EASY]) were registered initially as many as 1.1 million arrivals of asylum seekers in 2015, but multiple registrations were not considered and after the ending of the post-registration phase, the number of arrivals was 890,000 (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2016).

Processes and flows of international migration increasingly affect the domestic politics, bilateral relationships, and national security policies of states worldwide. Particularly since the end of the Cold War, this has coincided with a securitization of migration, driven by politicians and media who portray human mobility as a fundamental threat to the security and cultural integrity of destination societies (de Haas et al., 2020). This development opened to the redefinition of security itself once again, expanding it from traditional military frameworks to encompass emerging transnational threats, like ethnic conflicts, organized crime, and cybersecurity (Stritzel, 2014). This is the result of international debates during the 1990s on the concept of “human security”, which similarly re-directed security away from the state, as the primary referent object, and towards the protection of individuals and populations from a wide range of threats, including economic, health, and identity-based insecurities, reflecting a growing concern with other kinds of risks, apart from military ones ((Howard-Hassmann, 2012), capable of affecting populations regardless of their location or status (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007; Tomuschat, 2008; Benedek, 2005; Nolte, 2010). In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme defined the concept around two complementary dimensions: freedom from persistent threats (such as hunger, illness, and political oppression), and protection against violations to the ordinary daily existence (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 1994). Consequently to this evolution in the sphere of security, European liberal democracies now face a structural paradox; while migration is deemed to be economically and socially necessary, to combat labor shortages and demographic decline, but the political narratives frequently frame migrants as a potential source of instability to the nation (de Haas et al., 2020). Furthermore, modern transport and communication technologies do allow immigrants to maintain transnational identities, by staying in constant touch with their home countries, a connection which could defy the

traditional, homogeneous ideas of national identities (de Haas et al., 2020).

This reality introduces two major challenges for domestic and international politics: the first, is a socio-cultural challenge, as incorporating culturally diverse populations disrupts the nation-state model, as historically, nation-building often relied on forced assimilation or the exclusion of minorities, and high modern migration places immense strain on these traditional state-nation models (de Haas et al., 2020). The second, is the challenge to sovereignty, as globalization compromises a state's ability to regulate its borders as effective regulation requires improved international cooperation, but governments remain reluctant to surrender national sovereignty over issues of migration and citizenship (de Haas et al., 2020). Today, European migration governance reflects a very delicate balance between humanitarian obligations and restrictive border policies, and while the EU promotes common asylum and migration frameworks, member states retain significant authority over border management, integration, and citizenship, leaving questions of identity, rights, and belonging at the very center of contemporary European politics.

1.2 European Union Migration Law and Policy Framework

The European Union has progressively developed a legal and institutional framework to regulate migration, asylum, and border management in the past decades. Over time, the migration governance has evolved from being primarily a matter of national competence into an integrated European policy field, involving supranational institutions, common legal standards, and shared operational mechanisms (Niemann & Zaun, 2023). This evolution is represented in the development of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ), established under Title V of the TFEU (Articles 67-89), one of the most politically sensitive policy domains in the history of European integration (Uçarer, 2013). Article 67(2) TFEU commits the Union to “frame a common policy on asylum, immigration and external border control, based on solidarity between Member States”, while Articles 78-80 TFEU set out the specific legal bases for asylum policy, immigration policy and for the principle of solidarity and fair-sharing of responsibility among the member states.

What began as an informal, intergovernmental cooperation among justice and home affairs ministers in the late 1960s has gradually evolved into a fully-fledged EU policy area, covering immigration, asylum, border management, police cooperation, and judicial

coordination (Uçarar, 2013). The road to this transformation was driven by two converging pushes: on one hand, the surge in cross-border movements across Western Europe (following the Second World War) which brought with it growing fears about transnational crime and weak border management, as well as irregular migration, and on the other hand, the ambition to complete the single market (which required the dismantling of internal border controls) made it compulsory to develop common rules to decide who could enter and move across the EU territory (Uçarar, 2013).

The institutional architecture that emerged from this process was anything but straightforward. Early cooperation took place largely outside EU structures altogether, but it was only with the Maastricht Treaty of 1993 that Justice and Home Affairs were formally incorporated into the EU framework, in an intergovernmental third pillar that kept the European Commission, Parliament, and Court of Justice at the margins (Uçarar, 2013). Decision-making required unanimity, which systematically produced the lowest common denominator effect and rendered meaningful policy progress difficult (Uçarar, 2013). The Schengen Agreement, first signed in 1985 by a handful of member states, was a significant exception to this pattern of slow progress. By committing its signatories to the abolition of internal border controls and the development of a common external border regime, Schengen created a template for deeper integration in this domain, including a shared information system (SIS) for tracking asylum applications and criminal records (Uçarar, 2013).

Then, the Amsterdam Treaty (1999) marked a turning point: by transferring large parts of immigration and asylum policy from the intergovernmental third pillar into the Community framework (a process known as “communitarisation”) it subjected these areas to ordinary EU legislative procedures for the first time, strengthening the roles of the Commission and the European Parliament, while extending the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice (Uçarar, 2013). That same year, the Tampere European Council translated this into a concrete policy agenda, committing member states to build a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), later given its legal basis in Article 78 TFEU, which mandates a common asylum policy in accordance with the Geneva Convention and developing common rules for the treatment of third-country nationals, as later codified in Article 79 TFEU, and linking migration governance to development cooperation and foreign policy, consistent with the coherence obligations presented in Article 208 TFEU (Uçarar, 2013). Central to this emerging asylum framework

was the Dublin Regulation, which established the principle that asylum claims should be processed by the first EU member state of entry (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019).

Subsequent programmes, the Hague Programme of 2004 and the Stockholm Programme of 2010 built on this foundation, pushing for the full implementation of the CEAS, the expansion of Europol and Eurojust, the creation of Frontex as a dedicated border management agency and the progressive integration of internal security with the EU's external relations. The Lisbon Treaty (2009) then completed this normalisation process, by abolishing the pillar structure entirely, bringing police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters fully within the ordinary legislative and granting the European Parliament co-legislative powers across the AFSJ (Uçarar, 2013). Importantly, the Lisbon Treaty also converted the Charter of Fundamental Rights into a legally binding instrument and extended the full jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) to the AFSJ, establishing judicial review as a structural requirement of EU migration governance (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019). Alongside the CJEU, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) played an important role in analysing and judging EU migration practices, particularly regarding detention conditions, assessed primarily under Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (right to liberty and security) and, where conditions are inadequate, Article 3 ECHR (prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment). Other practices considered are the pushbacks at external borders, which the Court has evaluated under Article 4 of Protocol No. 4 ECHR (prohibition of collective expulsion of aliens), in connection with Articles 3 and 13 (effective legal remedy) ECHR, and the application of the safe third country concept, tested against the *non-refoulement* principle in Article 3 ECHR, areas where national and EU-level actions have repeatedly been found to fall short of the standards set by the ECHR (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019).

Since the beginning of its cooperation on external migration policy, the EU developed a set of bilateral cooperation frameworks, including readmission agreements, the Mobility Partnerships, the Common Agendas for Migration and Mobility, and the EU-Turkey Statement of 2016, as well as regional frameworks such as the Rabat and Khartoum Processes, and the broader Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment (Niemann & Zaun, 2023). This evolution of cooperations accelerated even more following the migration flows of 2015, the increase in deaths at sea and the surge in arrivals of Syrian

refugees, which prompted the adoption of a range of new policy instruments, including the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF Africa), the Lebanon and Jordan Compacts, the EU-Libyan cooperation on border control, and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions in the Mediterranean, as well as a significant expansion of Frontex's mandate and resources (Niemann & Zaun, 2023). Subsequently, migration control became more and more integrated into other areas of EU foreign policy, with CSDP missions deployed to train national police, military forces, and border guards, and to combat organised crime, terrorism, and human trafficking, measures that attracted a lot of criticism from human rights organisations for facilitating pushbacks and the criminalisation of migration (Niemann & Zaun, 2023). As Carrera, Santos Vara and Strik (2019) argue, the crisis functioned as a policy window, for allowing the adoption of measures (more particularly in the area of externalisation) that would likely have been too controversial otherwise to pass under just ordinary, political circumstances.

The most recent attempt to reform the EU's migration framework came with the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, proposed by the European Commission in 2020. The Pact sought to address the failures of the Dublin system, by introducing new solidarity mechanisms, streamlined border procedures, and generally a more structured approach to returns and external partnerships (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019). However, it has also attracted significant criticism for prioritising border control and rapid return procedures over the protection of asylum seekers' rights, and for continuing to rely on externalisation as a core governance strategy (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019). The tensions it looked to resolve, the ones between solidarity and sovereignty, and the ones between protection and control remains, though, unresolved.

European migration governance today reflects an increased security-oriented approach, as agencies such as Frontex have gained greater importance in border management and surveillance operations, while newly developed technologies including biometric databases, digital border monitoring, and information-sharing systems have expanded significantly within the EU (Niemann & Zaun, 2023). At the same time, the informal means of EU influence like third countries reacting to EU policies, by either backing or opposing them, affect the migratory movements in ways that go beyond the simple, formal policy instruments and are definitely harder to measure or to eventually hold accountable (Niemann & Zaun,

2023). The EU migration framework today thus demonstrates a dual (and sometimes contradictory) objective: on one hand, the will to guarantee international protection and to respect fundamental rights in accordance with European and international law; on the other, the prioritisation of border control, the prevention of irregular migration and all security-driven approaches that come with it.

1.2.1 European Legal Typology of Migration and Competences in Migration and Asylum

The legal regulation of migration and asylum within the European Union rests primarily on two foundational treaties: the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Migration and asylum policies fall within the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ), the framework established under Articles 67-89 TFEU to reconcile the free movement of persons with the need for internal security and coherent border management across member states (Uçarer, 2013).

EU migration law operates through a typology of distinct legal categories, each governed by different instruments and procedures. These include asylum seekers, recognised refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, regular labour migrants, irregular migrants, family reunification applicants, students, and long-term residents. This legal categorisation is far from merely administrative, because it determines access to residence permits, protection mechanisms, procedural guarantees, and the full range of social and economic rights to which an individual may be entitled. The Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU), the Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU), and the Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU) together form the core of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), establishing minimum standards for the treatment of protection seekers across member states (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019).

Competences in migration and asylum are formally shared between the EU and its member states. Competences in migration and asylum are formally shared between the EU and its member states, in accordance with the principle of conferral set out in Article 5 TEU and the classification of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice as a shared competence under Article 4(2) TFEU. Under Articles 77–80 TFEU, the Union holds authority to develop common policies on asylum, external border management, visas, and immigration more

generally, while remaining bound by the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality (Art. 5(3)-(4) TEU) in exercising this shared competence. Article 78 (TFEU) specifically mandates the development of a common asylum policy in accordance with the 1951 Geneva Convention, and its 1967 Protocol are the foundational instruments of international refugee law, as well as with other relevant international treaties. Article 80 of the TFEU governs the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility among member states which, in any case, can retain decisive powers in areas such as integration policy, citizenship acquisition, national security, and the domestic implementation of EU migration law (Uçarer, 2013). This division of competences has proven to be a persistent source of institutional tensions, which became visible during the 2015 migration crisis, when disagreements emerged over relocation quotas, the distribution of asylum seekers, and the reintroduction of internal border controls, exposing the limits of solidarity as a practical mechanism rather than a formal legal principle (Niemann & Zaun, 2023).

The fundamental rights dimension of EU migration law adds another element of legal complexity. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which became legally binding with the Lisbon Treaty under Article 6(1) TEU, which grants the Charter “the same legal value as the Treaties”, thus elevating it to the rank of EU primary law, establishes in Article 18 the right to asylum, and in Article 19 the prohibition of collective expulsion and the protection against *refoulement*, the principle that no person may be returned to a country where they face serious risk of persecution or inhuman treatment. This prohibition is simultaneously anchored in Article 33 of the 1951 Refugee Convention and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), binding EU member states through both EU law and the Council of Europe framework (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019). The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has repeatedly found member states in violation of Article 3 ECHR in migration-related cases: most notably, in *M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece* (2011), where it held that the transfer of an asylum seeker to Greece under the Dublin Regulation exposed him to inhuman and degrading treatment, and in *Hirsi Jamaa and Others v. Italy* (2012), where it ruled that Italy's practice of pushing back migrants intercepted at sea violated the prohibition of collective expulsion and the principle of *non-refoulement* (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019).

The principle of solidarity (Article 80 of the TFEU) is intended to serve as the normative

backbone of European migration governance. In practice, however, it has proven one of the most contested and unevenly applied principles in the entire AFSJ. The repeated failures to implement meaningful burden-sharing mechanisms reveal a mismatch between the legal architecture the Treaties envision and the reality of member state cooperation on a political level (Niemann & Zaun, 2023). This mismatch stems from the fact that Article 80 TFEU cites solidarity as a guiding principle, without binding enforcement mechanisms, while the uneven exposure to migratory pressure among member states has produced different national interests.

1.2.2 Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and Asylum Procedures Directive

The Common European Asylum System (CEAS) is the legal architecture through which the European Union seeks to harmonise the treatment of asylum seekers, establishing common standards for international protection, procedural fairness, and reception conditions with the aim of reducing disparities between national systems (European Commission, 2026). Between 1999 and 2005 this produced six founding instruments, including the Eurodac Regulation, the first Reception Conditions and Qualification Directives, the Dublin II Regulation, and the first Asylum Procedures Directive; a second phase, prompted by persistent divergence between national systems (European Commission, 2026). Within this architecture, the Dublin system determines which single member state is responsible for examining an application, in principle to guarantee applicants swift access to a procedure and to discourage parallel claims (European Commission, 2026). In practice, responsibility falls in most cases on the state of first entry, a design long criticised for placing a structurally disproportionate burden on frontline border states (Amnesty International, 2018; European Parliament, 2020).

The Asylum Procedures Directive (Directive 2013/32/EU) has, until its recent repeal, been the CEAS's principal procedural instrument, laying down common guarantees on access to the procedure, personal interviews, legal assistance, and appeal, while leaving member states considerable discretion, including over the definition of “safe countries of origin” at national rather than Union level (European Commission, 2026; European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026). This discrepancy helps explain why formal harmonisation has not produced comparable outcomes, with the Agency itself that acknowledges how such gaps are “a sign

of a lack of convergence” rather than just variables of different, specific cases (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024).

Alongside this fracture, the CEAS has absorbed a security-oriented set of means, from accelerated and border procedures to detention and inadmissibility concepts (European Commission, 2026). This direction was seen concretely in the 2024 reform under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, adopted by the Parliament and Council in April and May 2024, which replaces the Asylum Procedures Directive with a directly applicable Asylum Procedures Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2024/1348, applied from 12 June 2026) and the Dublin III Regulation with a new Asylum and Migration Management Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2024/1351, applicable mostly from 1 July 2026) (Danish Refugee Council, 2026; European Commission, 2026). The new Regulation introduces, for the first time, Union-level safe country-of-origin designations and a mandatory border procedure for applicants whose nationality carries an EU-wide recognition rate of 20% or below, a threshold that covered roughly half of all EU+ applicants in 2025 (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026).

Germany's own adaptation was demonstrated in September 2025, when the Federal Cabinet adopted legislation explicitly enabling “additional possibilities for more restrictive asylum procedures”, including dedicated “secondary migration centers” for Dublin-type cases and extended airport-style procedures, both applicable from 12 June 2026 alongside the rest of the reform (Bundesregierung, 2026; Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, 2026). A quarter of a century after Tampere set out a project of harmonised protection, the CEAS is thus increasingly being operationalised through faster and more restrictive, security-oriented practices, a development this thesis returns to throughout its discussion of the securitization of asylum and migration governance in Germany.

1.2.3 Externalization Practices and Cooperation with Third Countries

One of the most important developments in contemporary European migration policy is the externalization of migration management. The externalization term refers to the process through which migration control is applied and transferred beyond EU borders through cooperation with third countries: this includes various policies of extra-territorial migration management, such as the externalisation of European borders to the Sahel region, but also

restrictive border practices, return and readmission agreements and Mobility Partnerships with third countries as well as multilateral aid programs, which are either provided in exchange for migration control or designed as remedies for the ‘root causes of migration’ (Niemann, A., Zaun, N., 2023).

Even if the internal dimension of EU migration policy was originally more pronounced, the external aspect has evolved into a central pillar. The European Union relies more and more on agreements with transit and origin countries, to prevent migrants from reaching European territory: these partnerships often involve instruments such as financial assistance, border control support, development aid, readmission agreements and security cooperation (Niemann, A., Zaun, N., 2023). For this, new multi-lateral and bi-lateral agreements on border management were signed between the EU, its Member States and third countries and in the process, border functions have been delocalized and responsibilities for border control (partially) delegated (Grappi & Lucarelli, 2021).

In 2015, the refugee crisis exposed a deep breakdown in European solidarity and revealed how security concerns have come to dominate EU migration governance at the expense of human rights. Instead of sharing responsibility fairly, EU states used “crisis” rhetoric to justify emergency measures that just meant to bypass the standard democratic rules trying to find a proper strategy to escape legal responsibility (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019; Müller & Slominski, 2020). This emergency approach directly undermined the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, which was meant to put EU migration policy on a firm constitutional base: the Treaty made the Charter of Fundamental Rights legally binding, gave the European Parliament real law-making power, and subjected all border laws to judicial review by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). These moves, backed by Article 2 TEU which cites the rule of law as one of the foundational values on which the Union is built, together with Article 19(1) TEU, Article 47 of the Charter, established that the EU is bound by the rule of law and that no government action can escape court oversight (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019).

Yet, panicked by political pressure, EU leaders intentionally bypassed these constitutional rules and turned to informal political deals like statements and compacts, specifically designed to avoid parliamentary voting and court accountability (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019). The primary example is the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement, where the EU offered money and political favors for Turkey to take back asylum seekers (Carrera, Santos Vara &

Strik, 2019). To make this work, Greece labeled Turkey a “safe third country”, to turn people away without checking their safety needs, directly violating the *non-refoulement* principle (the international ban on returning refugees to danger) and when refugees sued, the EU General Court refused to hear the case by claiming individual states made the deal, not the EU itself, using institutional ambiguity to escape legal scrutiny (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019). In other words, violations of the law that can (and in fact do) derive from these agreements are not formally attributable to the EU in legal terms, although they can be traced to the EU in ethical and political terms (Fassi, Ceccorulli and Lucarelli 2021). At the same time, “externalization” became the EU's main strategy and the EU border agency, Frontex, grew massively in power, while military operations like EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia were deployed in the Mediterranean (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019). In practice, this externalized architecture is highly uneven due to the differing leverage of the partner states (if they share a physical border, for example) (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019).

Ultimately, what emerges from this picture is not simply a policy failure but a deeper structural contradiction: a Union publicly committed to the rule of law, democratic governance and human dignity, yet constructing a migration system that trades rights for control, sidelines its own institutions, and exports its legal obligations to countries not equipped or simply unwilling to uphold them (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019). What makes these escape strategies structural, rather than just incidental, is their systematic reliance on legal forms (as informal agreements, externalization arrangements, and operational discretion under shared competence), falling outside the ordinary channels of judicial and parliamentary accountability that the Lisbon Treaty was meant to establish.

1.2.4 Recent Developments: the 2026 Pact on Migration, Return Regulations and Agreements and Third Country Hubs

Recent years have witnessed major reforms and proposals, aimed at restructuring the European migration governance. Among the most significant initiatives, is the New Pact on Migration and Asylum proposed by the European Commission, which seeks to reform the Common European Asylum System and establish a more coordinated migration framework (European Commission, 2026). The EU fully launched its new Pact on Migration and Asylum on 12 June 2026, and, according to human rights organisations, it is one of the most damaging

and sweeping overhauls of European asylum law in recent decades, occurring alongside a broader wave of punitive deportation measures still being negotiated, with substantial portions of domestic migration laws and local terminology are effectively being replaced by standardized European rules in a growing trend where the EU treats migration as a shared regional security issue rather than a collection of separate domestic policies (Sohlberg & Johansson, 2026; Human Rights Watch, 2026a).

Just newly approved, this big package of ten binding legislative instruments makes it easier for member states to rush asylum decisions through truncated "border procedures," as checks must be finished within seven days at the border, or within three days if someone is stopped inside a country (European Commission, 2026; Human Rights Watch, 2026a). It also extends the use and duration of detention and introduces a Crisis Regulation that allows governments to deny people the right to apply for asylum altogether in broadly defined situations of "mass influx" or so-called "instrumentalisation" of migration by third countries with emergency response mechanisms that activate rapid financial and operational assistance (European Commission, 2024; Human Rights Watch, 2026a), completely changing how Europe handles migration.

Determining exactly which country must host this process is governed by the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation (AMMR), which replaces the outdated Dublin III framework. The AMMR stabilizes the system by legally binding applicants to their country of first entry, while simultaneously creating a mandatory solidarity mechanism to ensure front-line states are not overwhelmed; under this system, other member states must choose between relocating applicants to their own territory, making financial contributions, or providing operational aid (European Commission, 2024). According to University of Gothenburg researchers Andrea Spehar and Karin Åberg, this reform alters the balance of power by shifting authority away from individual nations and toward centralized European governance. Instead of utilizing flexible directives that states can adapt, the EU is now deploying directly binding regulations. This means, that substantial portions of domestic migration laws, and of national laws terminology used, are effectively being replaced by standardized European rules. Under this centralized model, the European Union Agency for Asylum will actively police national compliance, in a growing trend where the EU treats migration as a shared regional security issue, rather than a collection of separate domestic

policies (Sohlberg & Johansson, 2026).

The pact replaces the voluntary agreements with a mandatory, new “solidarity mechanism”, rather than distributing responsibility more equitably across member states and replaces old, voluntary agreements to relieve front-line border nations, like Italy and Greece, from carrying an unfair operational burden (Sohlberg & Johansson, 2026), effectively allows wealthier states to opt out of receiving relocated asylum seekers, so it lets member states choose how they want to help, meaning wealthier countries can avoid taking in relocated refugees by paying financial penalties or offering equipment for border infrastructure, fences, barbed wire, and surveillance systems, leaving frontline states disproportionately burdened as before (Sohlberg & Johansson, 2026; Human Rights Watch, 2026a). This means front-line countries like Greece or Italy are no longer left to handle large waves of migration on their own. Other EU nations must help, though they have choices in how they do it, either by taking in some of the asylum seekers, contributing money, or providing hands-on operational support. At the same time, migrants are clearly required to apply in the very first EU country they step into (European Commission, 2026). Finally, the pact sets up a clear safety net for major crises, such as sudden massive spikes in arrivals or situations where non-EU countries weaponize migrants for political leverage. In these emergencies, affected states can get fast-tracked rules, emergency funding, and extra personnel from EU agencies like Frontex (European Commission, 2024).

Implementation challenges emerge regarding procedural safeguards and mechanisms for monitoring fundamental rights, which are considered essential to ensure the compatibility of the new framework with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and in particular the right to asylum (Di Pascale, 2026). On this point, the Commission insists on the need for member states to make the independent monitoring mechanisms provided for in the Pact fully operational, and almost all member states are close to finalising agreements to guarantee free legal advice during the administrative phase of the asylum procedure, although around a third still need to complete the necessary legislative adjustments (Di Pascale, 2026). At the same time, most member states have established or consolidated forms of cooperation with external bodies (including NGOs, professional associations and independent bodies, and the UNHCR) and are finalising the framework for mechanisms to monitor fundamental rights in border procedures (Di Pascale, 2026). In parallel, European agencies and bodies, in particular the

Fundamental Rights Agency and EUAA, have developed guidelines, operational tools and training activities to support the uniform implementation of the system, including specific materials on minors and age assessment (Di Pascale, 2026).

Another important development in the EU migration governance concerns the increasing emphasis on returns and deportation policies. On 17 June 2026, the European Parliament approved a Return Regulation that expands the legal basis for forced removals and externalisation, seeking to strengthen return procedures for individuals without legal authorization to remain within the EU (European Commission, 2026); two days later, nineteen EU member states signed an open letter encouraging the "full use" of so-called "return hubs", "third country hubs" or "safe third country", facilities located outside EU territory to which rejected asylum seekers, including families with children, would be transferred if direct deportation to their country of origin proves impractical, which involves transferring asylum processing or migrant reception responsibilities to non-EU countries outside European territory (Human Rights Watch, 2026b; Sunderland, 2026). Five member states (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, and the Netherlands) have already openly expressed interest in establishing a joint return hub, with destinations reportedly under consideration including Rwanda, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mauritania, and Kazakhstan, countries with documented and serious human rights concerns that the EU has consistently failed to address in its bilateral engagement with their governments (Sunderland, 2026).

Critics, however, warn that offshore processing and external reception centers risk undermining international protection obligations and restricting access to asylum rights: ahead of the European Parliament's final vote on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum in April 2024, Amnesty International issued a stark warning about the human rights implications of the proposed reforms (Amnesty International, 2024). The organisation argued that rather than strengthening European asylum law, the Pact would set it back significantly, weakening protections for people on the move, expanding detention and containment at borders, and further eroding access to fair asylum procedures in an unprecedented rollback of asylum rights and characterised the agreement as an attempt to circumvent international legal obligations while further offloading the EU's responsibility for refugee protection onto

countries outside its borders (Amnesty International, 2024; Amnesty International, 2025). Among the most serious concerns raised was the risk of subjecting asylum seekers, including families with children, to de facto detention at EU borders, without adequate individual assessment of their protection needs, and for introducing new emergency provisions that could facilitate pushbacks, arbitrary detention, and destitution at the external borders of the EU (Amnesty International, 2024).

From a legal standpoint, these arrangements raise profound questions about state responsibility under international law. As the literature on border externalisation and complicity in international law put it, when destination states direct migrant flows to third countries, they do not escape their international obligations: under Article 16 of the International Law Commission's Articles on the Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts (ARSIWA), a provision widely recognized as reflecting customary international law on state complicity, a state that knowingly aids or assists another state in the commission of an internationally wrongful act bears international responsibility for doing so. This principle has been read to extend to rights violations that happen as a result of externalisation efforts, even when those violations take place outside the assisting state's own territory (Lanovoy, 2016; Human Rights Watch, 2026b; Sunderland, 2026). The principle of *non-refoulement*, enshrined in Article 33 of the 1951 Refugee Convention (United Nations, 1951) and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe, 1950), prohibits not only direct return to persecution but also “indirect” or “chain” refoulement, the return of refugees to third countries where they face the serious risk of being subsequently returned to a place of danger. The ECtHR confirmed the extraterritorial reach of these obligations in *Hirsi Jamaa and Others v. Italy* (ECtHR, 2012), establishing that states cannot evade non-refoulement by outsourcing enforcement to third parties.

In Germany, Chancellor Merz met with Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa in Berlin in 2025 and jointly expressed the hope that 80 percent of the approximately one million Syrians who had sought refuge in Germany during the civil war would return home within three years (Bell, 2026). Merz argued that more than a year after the end of the war, the situation in Syria had “now changed fundamentally” and that “the need for protection must therefore be reassessed”, framing the withdrawal of protection status not as an exceptional measure but

as a logical administrative consequence of changed circumstances (Bell, 2026). He indicated that priority would initially be given to those who no longer held valid residence rights, particularly criminal offenders but made clear that broader returns would follow (Bell, 2026). Critics, however, pointed out that Syria remains deeply unstable: opposition politicians such as Franziska Brantner of the Green Party noted that many Syrians were deeply embedded in German society, holding systemically important jobs and raising children in German schools, and that returning was simply not a viable option for large numbers of people given the lack of infrastructure and ongoing security concerns (Bell, 2026). The Kurdish Community in Germany further warned that Syria's new leadership under Sharaa, who came to power in December 2024 following the Islamist rebel offensive that toppled Bashar al-Assad, had been accused of human rights violations and war crimes, and called on Merz to demand binding commitments on minority protection (Bell, 2026).

Overall, the very recent developments demonstrate that European migration policy is moving toward increasingly securitized and externalized forms of governance. While humanitarian protection remains formally embedded within EU legal frameworks, contemporary reforms reveal a growing emphasis on migration deterrence and containment strategies. These European dynamics are not merely abstract policy trends, because they then translate directly into domestic legal and political practice, as the German case demonstrates, which will be analysed further in the chapter.

1.3 German Migration Law and Security Policies

Germany represents one of the central actors within European migration governance due to its political influence, economic importance, and role as a primary destination country for migrants and asylum seekers in the European Union. Particularly after the migration movements of 2015, German migration policy underwent significant legal, political, and administrative transformations aimed at balancing humanitarian obligations, labor market needs, and internal security concerns. Today, German migration governance reflects a dual approach: on one side, Germany promotes itself as a liberal democratic state committed to international protection, integration, and economic migration. On the other side, growing political polarization, public debates surrounding security, and increasing electoral pressure have contributed to stricter migration control measures and the expansion of enforcement

policies.

According to the figures provided by the OECD, Germany saw a migration flow of 586.000 new immigrants on a long-term or permanent basis (including changes of status and free mobility) in 2024, which is a diminution compared to 2023 (-12%). Of these, 47% migrated out of free mobility, 11% were labour migrants, 18% were family members and the humanitarian migrants were 24% (OECD, 2025).

This structural momentum toward a more restrictive migration policy is heavily compounded by systemic changes in the federal executive branch, which explicitly codified an enforcement-oriented agenda following the political transition in mid-2025. In his inaugural government address to the *Bundestag*, Federal Chancellor Friedrich Merz signaled a fundamental realignment of Germany's domestic immigration structure, establishing the implementation of an orderly, highly controlled migration regime as a core state priority (Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 2025). While the administration explicitly recognized that contemporary Germany functions as a nation of immigration, its policy platform reoriented state mechanisms toward a doctrine more centered on enhanced boundary limitations, strict administrative oversight, and heightened entry controls (Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 2025).

The operational mechanisms introduced in this federal pivot carry direct implications for the domestic asylum and residence apparatus. The executive framework explicitly prioritizes a systematic expansion of rejections at national frontiers, alongside an administrative emphasis on executing a higher volume of forced deportations for third-country nationals, those whose protection claims have been denied (Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 2025). Significantly, federal leadership asserts that this restrictive guideline does not represent an isolated national policy, or a violation of international solidarity, but rather as a coordinated approach executed in strict alignment with wider European Union asylum laws (Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 2025).

This top-down executive pressure for rapid, decisive deportations provides the immediate political and structural backdrop for the administrative frictions observed within individual *Länder*. The federal directive to maximize returns exerts immense pressure on regional immigration bureaus (*Ausländerbehörden*) to meet enforcement targets. This environment of

accelerated removals directly intersects with (and frequently, exacerbates) the exact procedural breakdowns, judicial timing errors, and human rights challenges seen when executing forced repatriations against highly integrated and vulnerable minority populations, who are simultaneously the beneficiaries of Germany's external humanitarian aid (Connor, 2025a; Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 2025).

1.3.1 National Asylum and Residence Law

The German legal framework regulating migration and asylum operates on a structured statutory system mainly, derived from the German Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), the Asylum Act (*Asylgesetz*), and the Residence Act (*Aufenthaltsgesetz*): together, these legal instruments define the conditions for entry, residence, asylum procedures, deportation, and integration of foreign nationals within Germany. Nonetheless, this national framework does not operate in isolation, as EU law enjoys primacy over conflicting national provisions, and determining the interpretation and application of German migration and asylum legislation. Rather than functioning as isolated statutes, these legal instruments intersect to define the precise administrative boundaries for entering the country, maintaining a lawful physical stay, managing protection determination procedures, enforcing deportations, and accessing long-term socio-economic integration mechanisms (Federal Ministry of Justice, 2024a, 2024b; WiMi Project, 2019).

Historically, this framework was cited by Article 16a, Paragraph 1 of the German Basic Law, which explicitly guarantees an individual, constitutional right to asylum for any person fleeing political persecution (Federal Ministry of Justice, 1949). However, this expansive constitutional shield was progressively and often circumscribed by the landmark 1993 Asylum Compromise (*Asylkompromiss*). This political and legal compromise introduced Paragraphs 2 and 3 into Article 16a of the Basic Law, recognising officially the structural doctrines of safe third countries (*sichere Drittstaaten*) and safe countries of origin (*sichere Herkunftsstaaten*) (Federal Ministry of Justice, 1949; WiMi Project, 2019). By instituting these categories, the German state effectively barred individuals who entered its territory via an EU member state, or a designated secure third country, from invoking constitutional asylum protections (Federal Ministry of Justice, 1949; WiMi Project, 2019). This turn laid the domestic, constitutional groundwork for integrating German law with the European

multilateral frameworks, specifically for the responsibility allocation protocols, later codified under the Dublin Regulation (Höni, 2024).

The procedural mechanisms governing these applications for international protection are codified entirely under the Asylum Act. This statute outlines the strict legal criteria for granting either formal refugee status under Section 3, which aligns with the international standards of the 1951 Refugee Convention, or subsidiary protection under Section 4, which protects individuals facing an imminent risk of serious harm, such as torture or indiscriminate violence within an armed conflict (Federal Ministry of Justice, 2024a; WiMi Project, 2019). The execution of these intricate status assessments falls under the exclusive mandate of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, or BAMF). As a centralized federal agency, the BAMF is responsible for managing the entire application life cycle, conducting mandatory personal interviews with protection seekers, evaluating localized country-of-origin data, and issuing formal, binding status determinations (BAMF, 2023; Vulner Project, 2020).

On another point, the Residence Act governs the broader operational dimensions of post-entry immigration and border management. Under Section 1 of this Act, the legislature explicitly seeks to manage and restrict the influx of foreign nationals while balancing Germany's economic and humanitarian interests (Federal Ministry of Justice, 2024b). To achieve this, the Act establishes a distinct taxonomy of residence titles (*Aufenthaltstitel*) that are categorized by the purpose of the stay (Federal Ministry of Justice, 2024b). Labor migration and educational access are managed under Sections 16 through 21, to regulate entry for academic degrees, vocational training, and skilled economic employment. Humanitarian protection is addressed under Sections 22 through 26, which dictate the terms for issuing temporary or permanent residence permits following a positive status determination by the BAMF or through specialized state-led admission programs (Federal Ministry of Justice, 2024b). Furthermore, Sections 27 through 36 govern the right to family reunification for dependants of German citizens or for lawfully residing third-country nationals, while Sections 50 through 62 outline the legal obligation to leave the territory, the grounds for expulsion, and the practical execution of forced removals (Federal Ministry of Justice, 2024b).

This entire migration governance structure directly reflects the federal system

(*Föderalismus*) on which is built the German state. While the federal government (*Bund*) holds the exclusive legislative competence to establish national asylum standards, immigration laws, and international treaty compliance, the practical enforcement of these laws is highly decentralized across the sixteen federal states (*Länder*) (Vulner Project, 2020). Individual *Länder* possess extensive administrative autonomy over initial reception infrastructure, local municipal accommodation, long-term integration programs, and the direct execution of deportation orders via regional immigration offices (*Ausländerbehörden*) (Connor, 2025a; Vulner Project, 2020). Because the *Länder* regularly issue their own distinct administrative guidelines (*Verwaltungsvorschriften*) to interpret statutory clauses, such as the temporary deportation suspensions under Section 60a of the Residence Act, this decentralized model frequently results in significant regional variations, in how national migration policies are applied across different parts of Germany (Höni, 2024; Vulner Project, 2020).

Over time, this domestic legal apparatus has become interconnected with European Union migration governance, leading to a europeanisation of German policy. National immigration statutes are heavily structured by EU directives and regulations, including the Qualification Directive, the Asylum Procedures Directive, and the Family Reunification Directive (Radboud Repository, 2024; Vulner Project, 2020). In addition, the binding judgments from the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) continually reshape national jurisprudence, ensuring that German administrative practices conform to evolving European standards on human rights and procedural fairness (Radboud Repository, 2024; WiMi Project, 2019).

1.3.2 Skilled Immigration Act and Asylum Seekers Benefits

Alongside asylum governance, Germany has developed a parallel legal track for labour migration, signaling how globalisation has made borders more porous for capital and labour alike (Grappi & Lucarelli, 2021). The central piece of this agenda is the Skilled Immigration Act (*Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz*, 2020), amended in 2023 as the Act on the Further Development of Skilled Immigration, which the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI) frames explicitly as a response to labour shortages rather than a humanitarian or security measure, prioritising “language skills, qualifications and experience” to attract the workers that Germany needs (BMI, 2024a).

The reform entered into force in three stages between November 2023 and June 2024, with its most significant element, *Chancenkarte* (Opportunity Card, § 20a AufenthG), which allows third-country nationals to enter Germany for up to a year to search for work, provided they score at least six points on a scale weighing qualifications, language ability, professional experience, age, and ties to Germany (BMI, 2024a). The same package extended the Western Balkans regulation (§ 26 BeschV) and eased recognition procedures for foreign qualifications (BMI, 2024a). For asylum seekers and *Duldung* holders, labour market access, governed separately under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz*, 1993, as amended), was first shortened from nine to six months in late 2023 (BMI, 2023) and then, as part of Germany's September 2025 legislation transposing the EU's new Common European Asylum System package discussed above cut further to a maximum of three months from registration of the asylum claim (BMI, 2025).

Citizenship law was also reformed in parallel, through the Act on the Modernisation of Nationality Law (*Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz*, as amended, in force since 27 June 2024), which reduced the standard residency requirement for naturalisation from eight to five years (or three years, for cases of exceptional integration), introduced unrestricted dual citizenship, and extended birthright citizenship to children born in Germany where a parent has held lawful residence for at least five years (BMI, 2024b; *Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz*, n.d.). Then-Interior Minister Nancy Faeser presented the reform explicitly as a competitiveness measure, stating that Germany needed to offer skilled workers a credible “prospect of full belonging” (BMI, 2024b).

Complementing these legal pathways, the Job-Turbo initiative, launched jointly by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Employment Agency in October 2023, seeks to launch recognised refugees who have completed an integration course into employment as quickly as possible, coordinated through local job centers and employer partnerships (BMAS, 2023). In the recent years, Germany has also expanded bilateral migration and mobility partnerships, including agreements concluded with Kenya in September 2024 and with Uzbekistan shortly after, alongside existing arrangements with Colombia, Georgia, India, and Morocco (OECD, 2025). Taken together, this expanding labour migration contrasts alongside the separate, and more restrictive, legal regime that continues to govern asylum seekers and tolerated residents under the Asylum Seekers

Benefits Act, demonstrating how German migration law increasingly channels different categories of migrants towards different sets of rights and opportunities.

1.3.3 Administrative Measures: the Security Package Implementation in Munich

While simultaneously expanding legal pathways for the reception of skilled workers, Germany adopted a series of more restrictive measures targeting asylum seekers and irregular migrants. In September 2024, temporary border controls were reintroduced at all German land borders, initially for a six-month period, with the government indicating they would remain in place until EU asylum reforms were fully implemented (OECD, 2025; Bundesministerium des Innern, 2024). Then the coalition agreement concluded in April 2025 announced a two-year suspension of family reunification rights for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, the termination of voluntary admission programmes where possible, an expansion of the list of safe countries of origin, and a commitment to developing comprehensive regulatory frameworks aimed at raising the number of returns (OECD, 2025).

These measures did not emerge in isolation. Since the migration crisis of 2015, Germany has progressively built a security-oriented migration architecture through successive legislative packages commonly referred to as *Sicherheitspakete* (security packages). At the legislative level, the German government enacted the Act to Improve the Combating of Dangerous Persons and the Improvement of Data Exchange (*Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Terrorismusbekämpfung*, 2024), which expanded surveillance capacities and introduced additional data-sharing mechanisms between migration authorities and security agencies (Bundesministerium des Innern, 2024). Biometric registration systems and centralised migration databases have become core instruments of risk assessment and migration management, reflecting what Paris School scholars describe as the routinisation of security practices, the presence of control mechanisms into everyday bureaucratic processes rather than an exceptional political declaration (Bigo, 2002; Bigo & Tsoukala, 2008).

This security orientation has also extended to targeted checking procedures for specific nationalities. From 31 March 2025, Russian nationals applying for long-term residence, work authorisation, or family reunification in Germany, in Munich specifically, became subject to mandatory security interviews (*Sicherheitsgespräch*) as part of a federal regulation aimed at strengthening national security through enhanced background verification for certain

categories of residence applications (Serdiukov, 2025). These interviews, conducted at the local immigration authority (*Ausländerbehörde*), assess applicants' backgrounds, travel histories, and intentions before any residence permit is processed (Serdiukov, 2025). The measure reflects Germany's adaptation of its immigration procedures to the developing and changing geopolitical dynamics, and in particular its concerns about a potential influence or threat by the Russian Federation on German internal security (Serdiukov, 2025). Administrative reform has equally focused on compressing asylum processing timelines: special reception centres (*Ankunftscentren*), accelerated fast-track procedures and expanded detention possibilities for specific categories of migrants (including those subject to deportation orders and individuals deemed to pose security risks) have been progressively incorporated into German migration governance (OECD, 2025; Asylum Information Database, 2024).

The final effect of these reforms is a governance structure where humanitarian and security logics, somehow, coexist: Germany simultaneously attracts and looks at internationally mobile skilled workers as economic assets while subjecting asylum seekers, rejected migrants, and nationals of geopolitically sensitive states to a tight web of surveillance, accelerated procedures and enforcement moves. This selective approach, welcoming some while containing others, is not only unique to Germany but reflects the larger, structural contradiction identified throughout this research, the one between the EU's stated commitment to fundamental rights and the security-driven logics that behind its migration governance in practice (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019; Niemann & Zaun, 2023).

1.3.4 Enforcement Measures: Deportations and Return Policies

In his article *Is Deportation a Form of Forced Migration?*, Matthew J. Gibney (2013) examines why deportation is rarely included in studies of forced migration, despite appearing to fit the concept more clearly than many other forms of displacement. Gibney (2013) begins by observing that while even refugees and internally displaced persons retain some degree of agency over their decision to flee, deportees represent perhaps the clearest case of forced migration: they are compelled to leave through the direct exercise of state power, with no meaningful choice regarding their departure, which is driven entirely by “push” factors (detention, legal coercion, and physical force) (Gibney, 2013). Gibney argues this is not because deportation is insignificant, as it affects millions of people worldwide with severe

personal consequences, but because it is widely regarded as a kind of a “legitimate” form of forced migration, and as such rarely treated as a form of injustice requiring further research (Gibney, 2013).

This legal and ethical knot is further explored by Kaushal’s (2023) distinction between immigration and deportation as different exercises of state power: immigration is externally coercive, regulating who may cross into state territory from outside, while deportation is internally coercive, directed at individuals already present in it and therefore subject to the state’s own laws, while simultaneously excluded from its liberal democratic protections (Kaushal, 2023). As deportation grows in constitutional significance for the states of the Global North, Kaushal argues, its insufficient justification risks eroding the liberal democratic character of the state itself that practices it (Kaushal, 2023).

1.4 Legal Protections and Human Rights Safeguards

The regulation of migration and asylum within Europe does not operate though through security measures only: alongside the increasing securitization of migration governance, a system of international and regional human rights protections and safeguards establishes legal mechanisms aimed at protecting migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, regardless of their legal status. Here, international human rights law constitutes one of the fundamental normative frameworks limiting state power, and even though states maintain sovereign authority over borders and immigration policies, this authority is constrained by legal obligations deriving from international treaties, refugee law, and regional human rights systems. With this, migrants therefore remain individuals with rights and entitled to fundamental protections under international law.

This dynamic sets a duality within contemporary migration governance, where state priorities concerning deterrence, border security, and return policies clash directly with international legal obligations requiring respect for human dignity, procedural fairness, and protection from persecution, torture, or inhuman treatment. In practice, big discrepancies frequently emerge between formal legal guarantees and their implementation, and the growing externalization and securitization of migration policies within Europe has intensified debates regarding the effective protection of migrants’ rights and the compatibility of certain migration practices with international legal standards.

1.4.1 International Human Rights Law (UDHR, ICCPR, ICESCR)

The foundation of modern international human rights law created a universal framework of protections applicable to all individuals, including migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. This system emerged after the Second World War, with the adoption of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA, 1948). The Declaration recognizes the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings and affirms a broad range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Several of its provisions are particularly relevant to migration governance, including the explicit prohibition of discrimination under Article 2, the right to freedom from arbitrary detention under Article 9, the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution under Article 14, and the right to an adequate standard of living under Article 25 (UNGA, 1948). Although the Declaration itself was adopted as a non-binding instrument, its core principles strongly influenced and were later made into legally binding international treaties, most notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UNGA, 1966a) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNGA, 1966b), as well as many of its provisions, including the prohibition of arbitrary detention and the principle of non-discrimination, which are now widely considered to have attained the status of customary international law.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees fundamental civil and political rights such as the right to life under Article 6, the absolute freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment under Article 7, the right to liberty and security of the person under Article 9, due process guarantees within judicial and administrative proceedings under Article 14, and strict protections against arbitrary expulsion for aliens lawfully within a territory under Article 13 (UNGA, 1966a). These protections apply universally to all individuals subject to a state's jurisdiction, regardless of nationality or migration status. Another, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights focuses on economic, social, and cultural protections, including access to just and favorable conditions of work under Article 7, social security under Article 9, adequate housing and food under Article 11, healthcare under Article 12, and education under Article 13 (UNGA, 1966b).

1.4.2 The 1951 Refugee Convention and the *Non-Refoulement* Principle

The cornerstone of international refugee protection is the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted under the framework of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNGA, 1951), and subsequently expanded by its 1967 Protocol. The Convention provides the foundational legal definition of a refugee under Article 1A(2), identifying a refugee as any person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UNGA, 1951). This legal definition remains central to contemporary asylum systems, both within Europe but also globally.

One of the most critical principles established by the Refugee Convention is the principle of *non-refoulement*. Under Article 33(1), states are strictly prohibited from expelling or returning a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where their life or freedom would be threatened on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion (UNGA, 1951). *Non-refoulement* is widely considered a fundamental, non-derogable norm of international refugee law and constitutes a core component of customary international law.

The principle applies not only to formally recognized refugees but also to asylum seekers whose protection claims have not yet been fully examined, meaning, states must guarantee access to fair and individualized asylum procedures before carrying out removals or deportations. The Refugee Convention also establishes several essential rights for refugees, including access to courts under Article 16, public education under Article 22, gainful employment under Articles 17 through 19, identity and travel documents under Articles 27 and 28, and protection from administrative discrimination under Article 3 (UNGA, 1951). Nevertheless, states retain significant discretion concerning the specific design of asylum procedures, reception systems, and domestic residence policies. In recent years, the principle of non-refoulement has become increasingly central within debates surrounding border control and externalization policies. Practices such as pushbacks at maritime and terrestrial

borders, offshore processing, and migration management cooperation with third countries raise important and difficult legal questions regarding *refoulement* and state responsibility (Hessbruegge, 2012).

1.4.3 European Human Rights Law: the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)

Within the European context, migrant protections are constituted by regional human rights law, particularly through the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), adopted in 1950 under the framework of the Council of Europe (CoE), and the extensive jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) (Council of Europe, 1950). The Convention guarantees fundamental civil and political rights applicable to all individuals within the jurisdiction of member states under Article 1. Several provisions of the Convention are as well extremely relevant to migration and asylum governance, most notably Article 3, which states that no one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Council of Europe, 1950). Article 3 has an absolute character, meaning it permits no balancing test between national security risks and the individual's safety (Addo & Grief, 1998; Rudolf, 1998). Through a long line of jurisprudence, the European Court of Human Rights has affirmed that Article 3 contains an inherent *non-refoulement* obligation, meaning states cannot deport, extradite, or expel an individual to a country where they face a real, quantifiable risk of prohibited ill-treatment (Rudolf, 1998). Furthermore, Article 5 limits arbitrary state power regarding immigration detention, mandating that any deprivation of liberty must be lawful, compliant with prescribed procedures, and subject to rapid judicial review, while Article 8 guarantees the right to respect for private and family life, providing a vital legal counterweight in deportation cases involving long-term residents, integrated non-citizens, and individuals seeking family reunification (Council of Europe, 1950). Additionally, Article 4 of Protocol Number 4 explicitly prohibits the collective expulsion of aliens, requiring that every removal action be preceded by a rigorous, individualized assessment of each person's protection needs (Hessbruegge, 2012).

The European Court of Human Rights has significantly influenced migration governance through its dynamic interpretation of these provisions, and in landmark rulings such as *Hirsi*

Jamaa and Others v. Italy, the Grand Chamber clarified that states exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction and remain bound by the Convention when their military or border authorities exercise de facto or de jure control over individuals on the high seas (Hessbruegge, 2012; Papanicolopulu, 2013). This means that pushing back intercepted migrant vessels, without individualized screening, directly violates Article 3 of the Convention and Article 4 of Protocol Number 4 (Hessbruegge, 2012). Therefore, European human rights law represents both a fundamental legal safeguard and a site of political and legal contestation in contemporary migration governance, where the meaning and application of international legal norms are never fixed but are continuously re-interpreted and contested by different actors across political and judicial contexts (Wiener, 2018).

Having clarified this legal and normative framework at the European and international level, the following sections turn to two concrete case studies that illustrate how these principles are applied, tested, and sometimes undermined in practice: firstly, the administrative vetting since 2025 (through security interviews) imposed on Russian nationals residing in Munich, and the enforcement measures (through deportations) affecting Iraqi Yazidis, a population recognized as victims of genocide. Together, these cases are studied to analyse Germany's formal commitments under international and European human rights law and the securitization practices that are behind its migration governance, in reality.

2. Case Study I: Russian Nationals in Munich

This case study examines the lived experience of Russian nationals residing in Munich in the context of Germany's post-2022 security and migration policy. It draws on two primary sources of original qualitative and quantitative data, collected specifically for this research: (1) a semi-structured interview conducted in Russian language with a Russian national residing in Munich, anonymised throughout this chapter as "M.", and (2) an anonymous online survey, composed of nine open-ended questions, answered by eleven people (N=11) with Russian Federation citizenship, residents of Munich. The questions addressed perceptions of safety, institutional trust, discrimination, and access to services: here, focusing on perception, rather than on legal outcomes only, is methodologically important, as connected with the securitization theory's emphasis on the socially constructed nature of

security. It shows how affected individuals actually experience and interpret state practices, revealing the effects on personal security, trust and belonging, elements that formal analysis alone cannot gain. M.'s case is further documented by an official letter, issued to him by the *Kreisverwaltungsreferat* (Department of Public Order) of Munich, requiring him to schedule a mandatory *Sicherheitsbefragung* (security interview) as a condition for the continued processing of his residence permit application.

2.1 Geopolitical and Security Context (Post-2022)

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 triggered a rethinking of Germany's stance towards Russian citizens residing on its territory, extending well beyond diplomatic and economic sanctions right into the domain of migration and internal security administration. Whereas prior to 2022 Russian nationals applying for or renewing residence permits in Germany were processed through ordinary, administrative channels, evidence from this case study confirms that, by 2025, an additional, dedicated security-checking step had been introduced for applicants originating from the Russian Federation.

The bilateral relationship between Germany and the Russian Federation has experienced a profound and systematic unraveling following Moscow's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, an act that Berlin has explicitly condemned as an unlawful violation of international law and national sovereignty (Federal Foreign Office, 2026), in particular of the prohibition on the use of force enshrined in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which safeguards the territorial integrity and political independence of states (United Nations, 1945, art. 2, para. 4). In response, Germany has joined international coalitions in enforcing severe financial and technological trade restrictions aimed at destabilizing the Russian economy (Federal Foreign Office, 2026). Beyond economic warfare, the geopolitical friction has manifested inside Germany through a surge of clandestine operations, cyberwarfare, and state-sponsored disruption, prompting Berlin to completely halt governmental collaborations while maintaining ties only with exiled, independent Russian civil organizations (Federal Foreign Office, 2026). Security forces have continuously uncovered Kremlin-directed infrastructure subversion, highlighted by the Munich prosecution of several dual nationals plotting explosive attacks to cripple German military logistics and supply routes aiding Ukraine (Connolly, 2025). Furthermore, German intelligence has increasingly disrupted espionage rings gathering intelligence on defense technologies; examples include the detention of a

Kazakh operative tracking NATO deployments and drone manufacturing (Al Jazeera, 2026), alongside the high-profile arrest of a German-Ukrainian citizen who passed confidential defense data to a Russian military attaché, leading to the diplomat's immediate expulsion (Connor, 2026).

This breach of security shows the alarming proximity of foreign operatives to European leadership. The accused spy, leveraging her role as the head of a cultural understanding organization to operate as a high-level political lobbyist, managed to position herself directly behind Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at a December security summit in Berlin (Thurau, 2026). Beyond collecting biographical details on top-tier political attendees, she allegedly gathered military data regarding drone tests and production facilities, potentially assisted by two former Bundeswehr personnel who are under investigation for leaking official records (Thurau, 2026). Domestic intelligence assessments warn that Russian espionage and state-sponsored force within the borders of Germany have re-escalated to historical Cold War intensities, prompting Chancellor Merz to summarize the security climate as a state where the country is no longer at peace, even if it is not formally at war (Thurau, 2026). While Berlin continues to honor its deep historical accountability regarding the immense casualties suffered by Soviet citizens during World War II, contemporary diplomatic channels remain highly volatile: Germany routinely summons Russian envoys over explicit security threats, while Moscow routinely dismisses the espionage charges as an engineered and hostile propaganda (Al Jazeera, 2026; Connor, 2026; Federal Foreign Office, 2026; Thurau, 2026).

In 2023, M. moved to Munich, one year after the invasion began, having previously lived in Italy for seven years, and relocated to take up employment in a German company. Because his residence in Germany postdates the outbreak of the war, he could not draw a direct “before/after” comparison from personal experience, but even so, his account situates the emergence of the security interview requirement precisely within this post-2022 securitization trajectory. As he explained and as it was previously reported in the first chapter of this study, this security screening had not previously been required of Russian citizens prior to the war (and in any case not prior to 2025):

“As a Russian citizen, last year, when I applied for a residence permit, I had to fill out a questionnaire and additionally undergo a security check, which, as far as I know, Russian

citizens did not previously have to complete before the war in Ukraine began.” - M.

The official correspondence addressed to M. corroborates this institutional shift in concrete terms. Issued by the *Landeshauptstadt München, Kreisverwaltungsreferat (Ausländerbehörde)*, and dated 21 May 2025, the letter states that “for the further processing of your request, a security interview is required” (“für die weitere Bearbeitung Ihres Anliegens ist eine Sicherheitsbefragung erforderlich”), and that this interview is obligatory and can only be arranged by prior appointment. M. also recalled that he first learned of the new requirement informally, so prior to the receipt of the email with the letter attached, through a Russian-language Telegram channel for Russian migrants in Munich, weeks before receiving the official notification letter via email, in an indication that, in the initial period after the measure's introduction, information about it circulated within the affected community faster, and with less formal clarity than through official government channels.

2.2 Securitization and Political Concerns on Russian Nationals Presence In Germany

The introduction of a compulsory security interviews, targeting an entire national-origin category, rather than individuals flagged through specific risk indicators, is a textbook example of what securitization theory describes as the “elevation of a routine policy domain” (in this case, the migration administration) into one governed by what is perceived as an exceptional, security-driven logics. The formal justification for the measure, as reflected in its content, is counter terrorism and counter extremism vetting: M. described a lengthy questionnaire of six to eight pages, part of which required him to declare, by checking boxes, that he was not affiliated with a list of proscribed organisations.

“There is also a fairly long list of organisations where you have to tick a box confirming that you are not a member, for example, ISIS, Al-Qaeda... something like that, so terrorist organisations, extremist organisations. I'm not sure that all of them are strictly terrorists, but let's say, I suspect they are organisations that raise concerns for the German government.” - M.

The mismatch between the declared object of the vetting instrument (international terrorism and extremism) and its actual target population (in this case, nationals of the Russian Federation applying for residence permits, regardless of individual profile or conduct) is precisely the mechanism through which securitisation discourse operates: nationality itself

becomes treated as a proxy for risk and needing risk-assessment checking, independent of the individual's own history, personal or from a migratory perspective. This is reinforced by the fact that the questionnaire additionally asked M. to declare whether he had performed military service (which is a standard, compulsory obligation for Russian male citizens and unrelated to the war in Ukraine, and which he had completed roughly a decade earlier) requiring him to actively explain and put in context with a biographical fact so that it would not be misread as an indicator of involvement in the current invasion.

“I wanted to make it clear to them that this concerned events from ten years ago, and that it was regular, compulsory military service, and that I did not in any way take part in the invasion of Ukraine.” - M.

The extent to which this securitizing discourse is perceived to enter everyday life, beyond the administrative sphere, appears more limited according to the survey data collected for this study. Only 27% of respondents (3 of 11) reported that political discussions, media coverage, or public attitudes towards the Russian Federation had negatively affected their life in Munich, suggesting that, while state-level securitization is clearly documented in administrative practice, its diffusion into interpersonal and societal discourse is felt by only a minority of the surveyed community.

2.2 Administrative Measures Impact: The Security Interviews

The security interview procedure is formally initiated through a written notice from the *Ausländerbehörde*. The letter received by M. (referenced KVR-II/3522) instructs the recipient to telephone a dedicated number, within narrow weekly windows (for example, Monday 7:30–12:00 and 13:00–15:00, or Wednesday 7:30–13:00 only), in order to book an appointment; with calls received outside these hours are explicitly stated not to be answered. The letter further specifies that the interview should be expected to last at least one hour, that applicants must bring their national passport and proof of their current residence status, that a good command of spoken and written German is required, and that applicants who do not meet this standard must arrange for a “qualified interpreter” to accompany them (at their own expenses). Notably, the letter also instructs applicants to attend alone or accompanied only by their interpreter.

M.'s interview was held at the same *Ausländerbehörde* office where he had submitted his

residence permit application and was received individually, in a dedicated room, by a single case officer, and given a printed questionnaire of six to eight pages combining biographical background questions (including the military service question discussed above) with the multi-page list of proscribed organisations previously mentioned. Contrary to the letter's requirement that applicants without German proficiency bring an interpreter, M., who did not speak German fluently at the time, decided, after reading testimonies from other applicants on online forums, to attend without one, on the understanding that the questionnaire itself would be provided in the applicant's own language.

"The questionnaire, if I remember correctly, was in Russian but in any case it was not in German. The problem was that the staff member who was there hardly spoke English at all... she couldn't really help me much. She was just there, supervising the process, and sat next to me while I filled out the questionnaire." - M.

This account reveals a structural misinformation between the formal administrative expectation (that non-German-speaking applicants provide for their own linguistic support) and the practical reality of the interview room, where the supervising officer had limited capacity to assist even with basic clarifications, leaving applicants substantially reliant on self-interpretation of sometimes ambiguous questions, even if asked in their own language. Consistent with this, survey respondents were divided on the tangible impact of the new procedure: 55% (6 of 11) reported that the new security checks introduced for Russian Federation nationals applying for residence permits in Munich had affected their life in Germany in some way, against 45% who reported no such effect.

2.2.1 Impact on Human Rights Protections and Human Security Perceptions

From a human security perspective, regarded as freedom from fear as well as freedom from want, the two freedoms articulated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his 1941 "Four Freedoms" address to Congress, and considered as the prior concept of the post-war international human rights and human security frameworks (Johnson, 1987; Cassese, 1990), the most important feature of the security interview procedure, as experienced by M., is the acute uncertainty generated by the lack of substantive information provided in advance. The official letter announces the requirement of a security interview without describing its content, format, or evaluative criteria, leaving applicants to construct their own expectations,

frequently through informal channels rather than official guidance:

"When you receive this letter about the security check, the letter doesn't really give any details about what it actually involves... At first my mind was telling me that maybe there would be, I don't know, a police officer sitting there, asking questions about your past, digging into some details... It seemed like it would resemble an interrogation." - M.

This ambiguity caused some anxiety prior to the interview, which M. described as compounding the pre-existing stress of a first-time residence permit application, even though, in his own retrospective assessment, the actual procedure turned out to be a standardised, uniformly applied questionnaire rather than an individualised interrogation. This mismatch between an administrative measure, officially framed as protective of state security, and its felt impact on the individual's own sense of security and procedural fairness is reflected at the aggregate level: 55% of survey respondents (6 of 11) reported that these experiences had caused them stress, concern, or uncertainty about their future in Munich. The lack of prior transparency about the interview's scope and purpose, in particular, does not reflect the basic administrative process expectations.

2.2.2 Safety and Trust in Institutions

Despite these concerns, the survey data points to a generally high level of perceived safety and institutional trust within the surveyed community: all eleven respondents (100%) reported that they generally feel safe living in Germany and in Munich specifically, and 82% (9 of 11) reported feeling that their rights, dignity, and security are respected by German institutions, such as public offices and authorities. M.'s own account is broadly consistent with this pattern. Although he found the initial uncertainty around the security interview unsettling, his overall assessment, once the procedure was completed, was that it constituted an impersonal, universally applied bureaucratic step rather than a concrete sign of suspicion specifically directed at him:

"It's not that they doubt me personally, they simply make everyone go through this procedure." - M.

This depersonalised framing appears to have functioned as a mitigating factor for M.'s own trust in the institution, even as the procedure itself remains still a differentiated, nationality-

based administrative burden. At the same time, the language gap noted above, between the procedural expectation of interpreter support and the limited linguistic capacity of the supervising staff member, points to a more institutional shortfall in service delivery that is not though fully perceived by the general trust indicators.

2.2.3 Access to Services and Social Inclusion

On access to core services, 82% of survey respondents (9 of 11) reported feeling that they have full access to basic rights in Germany, including education, healthcare, employment, and public services. M. did not personally report any difficulties accessing services, including banking, although he was aware, through secondhand testimonies, that other Russian nationals had encountered restrictions in opening German bank accounts following the outbreak of the war:

“I know that some Russian citizens faced problems with bank accounts... after the war in Ukraine began, with banking matters, with opening accounts in Germany. But I personally haven’t had that experience, probably because I haven’t used German banks services recently.” - M.

The security interview requirement itself introduces a further, more subtle access dimension connected to language and information capital. M. considered, and ultimately declined, an offer from the visa agency handling his application to hire a professional interpreter for the day of the interview, a service that would have entailed an additional cost. His decision to forgo this option rested on informal accounts, as other applicants, primarily nationals of other countries subject to similar screening, indicated that the interview questionnaire would in practice be provided in the applicant’s own language. Nonetheless, applicants lacking the same access to such networks, or lacking sufficient confidence to proceed without support, would face a higher effective cost (financial, in hiring an interpreter, or psychological, in attending without one) to complete the same mandatory procedure.

2.2.4 Experiences of Discrimination

Survey results on discrimination present a mixed picture: 55% of respondents (6 of 11) reported having felt treated differently or unfairly in Germany because of their nationality, while 40% of those who arrived before 2022 (4 of 10 valid responses) reported that their

experience of living in Germany as a Russian Federation national had changed since the beginning of the war. A majority, 60% (6 of 10 valid responses), reported feeling more cautious about expressing opinions on politics, Russia, or the war in public or at work.

M.'s own experience, however, diverges from this majority pattern on the question of self-censorship. He reported that he does not feel the need to filter his opinions about Russian politics or the invasion of Ukraine, attributing this comfort to the fact that his own position, so the condemnation of the war and disapproval of Russian government policy, aligns with what he perceives to be the prevailing view among the European population around him:

“I don't feel that I'm being discriminated against, so to speak. I'm not afraid to say that I'm from Russia. [...] I feel that I can speak freely, because 90% of the people around me think the same way.” - M.

His account nonetheless reveals a more differentiated pattern in his interactions with Ukrainian nationals specifically, which he described as overwhelmingly positive in practice, but occasionally marked by initial wariness or coldness on the part of individual Ukrainians upon learning of his nationality, a reaction he described as understandable and did not resent:

“There have been cases when residents of Ukraine, citizens of Ukraine, reacted warily, or even with hostility, when you say you're from Russia. [...] I don't blame them for anything. It's their choice.” - M.

Taken together, M.'s individual account and the survey data suggest that experiences of discrimination and self-censorship within Munich's Russian community are neither universal nor absent, but distributed unevenly: a majority of surveyed individuals report at least some degree of differential treatment or increased caution in political expression, while at least one interviewed individual reports feeling largely insulated from such pressures, a difference that itself may be attributable to differences in personal networks and individual circumstances of arrival and integration into German society.

3. Case Study II: Iraqi Yazidi Community in Germany

3.1 Historical and Political Background: The Iraqi Yazidi Diaspora in Germany (Post-2014)

According to the statistics by Eurostat, in 2014, more than 21.000 Iraqis applied for asylum in the European Union (Bitoulas, 2015). These are the numbers forehead of the ISIS surge in Iraq in 2014, which saw a significant rise in numbers of asylum seekers to the European Union in 2015: with 121 500 first time applicants (or 10% of the EU total) in 2015, Iraq was the third country of citizenship of asylum seekers in the EU Member States (Eurostat, 2016). Among these, more than 9.000 applications were in Germany, the country which received more of them from Iraqi citizens than any other state in the EU (45% of the total asylum-seeking applications to EU countries of people with Iraqi citizenship) (Bitoulas, 2015).

Out of the tens of thousands of asylum-seeking applications of Iraqis to Germany, a not precisely quantified share of these came from Yazidis, with total Yazidi arrivals in Germany since 2014 estimated at over 100,000 by 2023, as per declaration of the German government (Ancite-Jepifanova, 2026; Deutscher Bundestag, 2023). The Yazidis represent a religiously defined community in the Sinjar region of northern Iraq, which remains the spiritual heartland of the tradition (Asatryan & Arakalova, 2002). Beyond Iraq, Yazidi communities are dispersed across Syria, Turkey, Georgia, parts of Western Europe, particularly Germany, and several regions of Russia (Asatryan & Arakalova, 2002). The community is widely understood to be ethnically Kurdish, but with a distinct, pre-Islamic faith (Barir, 2014). A central element to the persecution they have faced, is a theological controversy surrounding their veneration of *Tawûsê Melek*, the Peacock Angel, whose mythological refusal to bow before Adam closely parallels the Islamic narrative of Iblis's defiance and subsequent fall: a resemblance that has long led Islamist extremists to brand the Yazidis as heretics “devil-worshippers” and, by extension, legitimate targets of religious violence which made them historically vulnerable, also because conversion is not possible and membership is determined strictly by birth to two Yazidi parents, remaining also very religiously closed (Barir, 2014; Shende, 2021). Linguistically, Yazidis speak Kurmanji, a Northern Kurdish dialect with roots in the broader North-West Iranian language family, though many Yazidis deliberately refer to their language as “Ezdiki” as a way of asserting a distinct identity, despite

its remaining, in linguistic terms, a Kurmanji dialect (Asatryan & Arakalova, 2002).

In August 2014, Islamic State (IS) launched a coordinated assault on the town of Sinjar and the surrounding region in northern Iraq, the area inhabited for centuries by the Yazidis. What emerged from this catastrophe, beyond the immediate humanitarian crisis, was a profound reshaping of Yazidi collective identity: within Yazidi historical memory, the 2014 genocide came to be understood not as an isolated atrocity, but as the seventy-fourth in a recurring cycle of *Firmanat*, a term originally denoting an Ottoman sultanic decree, but which in Yazidi memory and identity have come to represent systematic campaigns of persecution and attempted annihilation (Barir, 2014). Under Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime, they were once labelled “Umayyad-Arabs”, while simultaneously treating them as politically suspect of their participation in Kurdish nationalist movements, for which they were subjected to forced Arabisation, and many now fear a parallel process of enforced “Kurdification” by Kurdish political movements seeking to absorb them for strategic gain (Barir, 2014; Yazda, 2016, as cited in Shende, 2021). Kurdish political actors, despite publicly celebrating Yazidis as “authentic Kurds” have largely left the community economically marginalised and politically powerless within the Kurdistan Region (Barir, 2014). This repeated exposure to violence has, paradoxically, reinforced a strong and cohesive collective identity, which is now also rooted in shared trauma (Shende, 2021). While some Yazidis identify as ethnically Kurdish, others insist on a wholly distinct ethno-national identity, asserting a whole distinct ethnic and religious identity, deliberately downplaying linguistic and cultural overlaps with Kurdish or with other Iraqi communities (Barir, 2014; Spät, 2017, as cited in Shende, 2021).

The violence inflicted by ISIS on the Yazidi community in northwestern Iraq was brutal and systematic, even with a lack of clear military or strategic reasons for targeting them, and this display of violence comprised mass killings of men and boys, the abduction and enslavement of women and girls, forced religious conversions, and the destruction of Yazidi cultural and religious sites (Cheterian, 2019). In the end, the Yazidi population, despite of their neutrality in Iraq's power struggles became the target of genocidal violence in 2014 in the Sinjar region, which unfolded with brutal predictability, given ISIS's openly stated genocidal intents towards them (Amnesty International, 2014; Cheterian, 2019).

ISIS operations in northern Iraq in 2014 have resulted in the deaths, abductions, and forced

displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. In August 2014, hundreds were abducted from the Sinjar region during ISIS advances: the survivors reported abductions, rapes, and sexual abuse, with captives detained in prisons, schools, and abandoned homes in ISIS-controlled areas (Amnesty International, 2014; Yazda & The Free Yezidi Foundation, 2015). Some Yazidi men were forced to convert to Islam, while others were executed (Amnesty International, 2014; Yazda, 2016a; Yazda & The Free Yezidi Foundation, 2015). Women and children remained in captivity, often pressured to convert under threat of violence or starvation (Amnesty International, 2014), and even after the liberation of northern Sinjar in late 2014, security concerns, unresolved territorial control, residual landmines, and restricted humanitarian access continue to prevent many displaced Yazidis from returning, with insecurity cited by over a third of internally displaced persons as the principal obstacle to resettlement (Nadia's Initiative, 2018, as cited in Shende, 2021).

For many Yazidis, the genocide closed any realistic prospect of returning to their ancestral lands in Sinjar or Shaykhan, while deepening skepticism toward the Kurdistan Regional Government as a protector of their safety. This has started a search for solutions located entirely outside the existing Kurdish-Iraqi political framework: proposals have ranged from the long-standing idea of an internationally protected autonomous enclave for religious minorities, to locate in the Nineveh Plain, to large-scale resettlement in Armenia (home to an established and relatively secure Yazidi community of around 40,000) to even more speculative suggestions involving resettlement in Israel (Barir, 2014). Despite their different levels of doability, these proposals do share one common idea: that any long-term solution must protect the unity and religious identity of the Yazidi community as a whole, rather than dispersing its members if its goal is really to prevent future existential threats.

3.1.1 The Geopolitical Instability in Contemporary Iraq

Today, the political situation in northern Iraq remains highly unstable and extremely dangerous, especially in the contested Sinjar area, where the central Iraqi government and the semi-independent Kurdish region are locked in a never-ending struggle over territorial control (Piecha, 2024). This instability is deeply aggravated by internal fractures within the Kurdish leadership itself, which is paralyzed by a bitter rivalry between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in the north, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in the south, and especially because the KDP relies on Turkey to counter local threats while the

PUK aligns with Iran, their domestic deadlock allows for foreign interferences and prevents the regional government from establishing real security, or stability (Piecha, 2024).

This governance vacuum has allowed a chaotic mix of heavily armed factions to transform the region into a dangerous, geopolitical battlefield. The militant Turkish-Kurdish organization, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), uses the local mountains as a strategic stronghold and uses some proxy branches, such as the Yabasha (YBŞ) Yazidi militia, to expand its influence in Sinjar (Piecha, 2024). At the same time, the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) have evolved, coming from a loose network of anti-terrorist units into a massive, state-funded powerhouse: backed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, these militias actively compete against Kurdish forces for economic and territorial gain also occasionally absorbing local warlords and units aligned with the PKK into their ranks (Piecha, 2024). Then, there is also, still, the persistent threat of the Islamic State (IS), which continues to launch insurgent attacks from hidden, regional pockets, despite losing its formal territory during the 2014-2017 war, and because the central military in Baghdad lacks the power to enforce true sovereignty over these disputed borders, the local population remains trapped in the middle of a continuous power-struggle between different factions and interests (Piecha, 2024).

3.1.2 A Slow Recovery: The Humanitarian Crisis in Sinjar

Further northwest, the district of Sinjar, located in the Ninewa Governorate, continues to suffer from the catastrophic aftermath of the 2014 Islamic State (IS/ISIL) offensive (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2022; The New Arab Staff, 2023). While the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) celebrated a joint security and reconstruction pact between Baghdad and Erbil in October 2020 as a step towards normalization (UNAMI, 2020; United Nations [UN], 2020), actual rehabilitation on the ground does not seem to have taken place. The IS forces had effectively obliterated 80% of public infrastructure and 70% of civilian homes in Sinjar City, alongside sabotaging critical agricultural irrigation networks, as reported by the IOM in 2022 (IOM, 2022). Consequently, basic necessities like clean running water, electricity, schools, and medical facilities remain severely lacking or simply unavailable, with this infrastructural ruin leaving roughly 200,000 Sinjaris trapped in a state of long-term displacement inside domestic refugee camps, mainly scattered across Iraqi Kurdistan (IOM, 2022; The New Arab Staff, 2023).

The Iraqi government has also faced sharp criticism for failing to compensate war victims under their own domestic laws. For example, Iraqi Law No. 20 explicitly guarantees financial restitution for assets destroyed by military errors or terrorism (Coogle, 2023). However, out of the more than 10,500 applications submitted by Sinjar residents, nearly half of them were approved and yet zero families received payouts due to bureaucratic knots, high (upfront) application fees and ongoing administrative friction between the federal government and the KRG (Coogle, 2023). In all of this, the Iraqi government occasionally celebrates for certain milestones perceived as such, like the repatriation of 487 Yazidis to Sinjar in late 2023 (The New Arab Staff, 2023) while the regional security landscape remains, undoubtedly, highly dangerous to live in.

Although the German Bundestag formally designated the 2014 atrocities committed by the Islamic State as a genocide in January 2023, several German states-initiated deportation procedures of Iraqi Yazidis just months later (Deutscher Bundestag (2023; Piecha, 2024). This policy was initiated by bilateral agreements with Baghdad and domestic judicial declarations, claiming that targeted persecution of the group had subsided. However, advocacy groups Pro Asyl and Wadi (2024) directly challenged these returns, documenting the precarious realities of contemporary Iraq in a comprehensive report which denotes that Sinjar remains a geopolitical battleground, and forcing Yazidis back to this unstable region subjects them to highly risky and very possible systemic and psychological vulnerabilities. More than 200,000 internal refugees remain stranded in camps, without having the economic infrastructure or livelihoods, and because the Islamic State explicitly sought the total eradication of the Yazidi identity rather than simple territorial displacement, critics argue that forcing these individuals back to a ruined homeland threatens their very survival as a distinct culture (Piecha, 2024).

3.1.3 Development Cooperation Perspectives: GIZ Iraq on Return, Fragmentation, and the Erosion of the Human Rights Frame

The documentary picture of protracted displacement and contested repatriation set out above is corroborated, and considerably complicated, by a practitioner perspective gathered for this research in a semi-structured interview with Dr. Katerina Kratzmann. Dr. Kratzmann is the cluster coordinator for governance, peacebuilding, and climate change at the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), Germany's main implementing

agency for technical development cooperation, conducted via Microsoft Teams on 22 June 2026 while she was posted in Iraq. Kratzmann, who has worked in Iraq since 2018 after several years at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), defined GIZ's current objectives as one branch of a wider German development architecture, concentrating on smaller-scale technical and capacity-building work, with peace and conflict and gender analysis mandated across every project.

Dr. Kratzmann's account of how this agenda has evolved reinforces the chapter's argument that Iraq's crisis has shifted, coming from an acute emergency to a protracted, lower-visibility condition of stalled recovery. She noted that GIZ has stopped constructing separate school facilities for children barred from local schools because of perceived Islamic State affiliation, but is, in her assessment, no longer required, and that the Organisation's work has instead shifted toward institutional capacity-building and, increasingly, climate change adaptation, which she described as "one of the most pressing future topics" in the country. This shift in programming logic, from emergency construction to governance support, exposes the same, underlying transition that section 3.1.2 documents when talking of unmet reparations and unresolved infrastructural destruction in Sinjar.

On the question of return, Kratzmann's testimony confirms the contradiction already identified in this chapter between Germany's formal 2023 parliamentary recognition of the Yazidi genocide and the deportation procedures that several German states initiated in the same period (Deutscher Bundestag, 2023; Piecha, 2024). Asked directly whether Yazidis are returning to Iraq, she was adamant that the legal recognition in Germany removes any pressing incentive to do so:

"When it comes to the return of Yazidis to Germany, it's not in their interest to return here. Why should they? Germany recognized the genocide of the Yazidi people, and with that they have certain rights in Germany. They have much better chances for proper status than other Iraqis have." - Dr. Katerina Kratzmann

In her account, the only recurring driver of movement back to Iraq is for family reunification, where a Yazidi individual chooses to rejoin relatives who remain unwilling to relocate to Germany, rather than any assessment that conditions in Sinjar have become viable. Where return does occur among internally displaced Yazidis seeking to leave camps for Sinjar itself, Kratzmann's description matches the infrastructural devastation catalogued in section 3.1.2:

unresolved land and housing ownership after properties were robbed or destroyed, no water and electricity, no functioning schools, and territory in practice controlled by armed militias rather than the state. She linked this directly to the disputed-territory governance vacuum (see section 3.1.1), noting that Sinjar's proximity to Mosul places it within an area where it remains unclear whether the federal government or the Kurdistan Regional Government bears responsibility for providing services, leaving residents unable to know “where to go for certain services”. Physical access itself has been even more complicated by the regional instability: Kratzmann noted that, during the two months preceding the interview, the border into Sinjar had been closed, with vehicles turned back at successive checkpoints, a restriction she connected to the regional crisis connected to Iran that had, by her account, displaced roughly 1,500 people from Iraq into Iran the previous April.

Kratzmann’s testimony adds a socio-economic dimension, describing an emerging food security crisis adding to the reparations failures and infrastructural collapse already documented in section 3.1.2. She described communities in and around Sinjar as being extremely poor, to the point that basic nutrition, not only housing or services, can no longer be guaranteed, a condition she tied also to Iraq's worsening climate worsening. Citing a 2025 IOM’s assessment, she reported that approximately 25,000 people across twelve Iraqi governorates had by that point been identified as displaced under a climate-induced emergency, while cautioning that isolating climate as a causal factor remains difficult to prove. She further described a distinct and, in her view, more and more visible phenomenon of the so-called “trapped communities”: populations that are unable to move not by choice but because they lack the material means to do so, living for extended periods without electricity, to the point that she recounted children in Baghdad being made to do their homework at night, the only times when limited power supply became available.

On the administrative side of the displacement camps, Kratzmann’s account extends the federal-KRG clashes (see section 3.1.1) into the specific question of camp closures, and described a recurring, so-far unmet federal government objective to close the roughly one million remaining internally displaced persons still living in camps, a policy federal authorities justify by reference to Iraq's middle-income status, and which the Kurdistan Regional Government resists on the grounds that most camp residents are not natively from

the Kurdistan Region and should not be its permanent responsibility, a dispute even aggravated by the withdrawal of the external funding that once supported the provision of services in the camps.

A further, and analytically important, contribution of this interview concerns the internal cohesion of the Yazidis both in Iraq and in the diaspora, which Kratzmann described in terms that complicate a reading of Yazidis as a unified political actor. Asked about the prospects for community-level return, she responded that no single, unified Yazidi community exists to begin with:

“There is no such thing as the Yazidi community. The Yazidi community is highly fragmented... they are fighting each other and really don't put themselves on the one road and pull it in the same direction.” - Dr. Katerina Kratzmann

She tied this explicitly to the diaspora in Germany, which she described as similarly fragmented and politicised, driven in part by competition among Yazidi organisations for the same pool of external funding, and she was notably self-critical of the international community's own role in entrenching this competition, remarking that “we are part of this problem, because we created it”. This observation resonates with the words of Walad Kiret in section 3.3, in which he distinguished his own, financially independent youth organisation from other Yazidi associations he described as backed by political actors, linked to the PKK or to Kurdish parties in Iraq and read together, the two interviews suggest that organisational divisions and the politicisation of funding that sustains it, operates as a consistent structural feature of Yazidi civil society across both the homeland and the diaspora, rather than as a phenomenon specific to either setting.

Kratzmann also drew attention to Germany's Skilled Immigration Act as a parallel, labour-oriented channel of engagement with Iraq, administered in Iraq partly through GIZ's own migration and development project, which she noted provides consultancy support both to Iraqis considering labour migration to Germany and to returnees already back in Iraq. She mentioned that, however, the political announcement of this possible existing pathway had created unrealistic expectations, making it seem as an easy, accessible process, when in

practice the recognition of foreign qualifications and the administrative checklist remains very demanding.

Finally, Kratzmann situated all of the above in the direction of the human rights paradigm for international migration and development work, one directly relevant to this thesis's own analytical framework. She argued that the near-unanimous rhetorical commitment to human rights that characterised the sector two decades ago has given way to a climate in which human rights arguments carry less practical weight, a changer that she attributed to the effect of the war in Ukraine, the war in Gaza, and the reconfiguration of Western foreign policy priorities, and which she illustrated by pointing to the progressive erosion of protections within the Common European Asylum System, despite symbolic reforms such as the introduction of a human rights officer at Frontex.

3.2 Migration Governance and Enforcement Policies

The contemporary execution of international migration law is characterized by a contrasting image, the one between state-level deportation initiatives and the overriding international humanitarian frameworks, showed by the evolving treatment of the Yazidi ethno-religious minority within Germany.

3.2.1 Statutory Frameworks, International Protections for Vulnerable Groups and the Contradictions of Forced Repatriation

The pillar of modern asylum protections rests upon the international legal doctrine of *non-refoulement*, a binding mandate codified across multiple human rights agreements, previously discussed in Chapter 1. Most explicitly, in Article 33 of the 1951 Refugee Convention, this rule dictates that no sovereign nation may forcibly expel or return an asylum seeker to a border where their physical freedom or survival is compromised due to identity factors such as race or religion (Höni, 2024). Within European jurisprudence, this protective umbrella has been expanded, and both the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the UN Human Rights Committee have established that *non-refoulement* applies more widely than just to narrow definitions of individualized tracking: it is triggered whenever substantial grounds suggest that a returnee faces a credible risk of “irreparable harm”, or degrading living conditions upon arrival (Höni, 2024).

At the international level, the UNHCR provides authoritative assessments of whether conditions in a country of origin permit the safe, dignified, and sustainable return of asylum seekers. When a region experiences widespread civil unrest, structural human rights violations, or localised armed conflict, the UNHCR issues country-specific non-return advisories of protection and urging host states to extend temporary or complementary protection to individuals who may fall outside the narrower definitions of the 1951 Refugee Convention while still facing severe collective threats upon return (United Nations, 1951).

Within German domestic practice, the principal mechanism for translating this kind of group-specific humanitarian relief into binding legal status is Section 23 of the Residence Act (*Aufenthaltsgesetz* [*AufenthG*], 2008), as already discussed also in Chapter 1. While standard asylum claims are processed individually through the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*), Section 23 establishes a distinct, executive-led alternative designed for acute humanitarian crises. Under Section 23, Paragraph 1 of the Residence Act (*AufenthG*, 2008), the supreme authorities of individual German federal states (*Bundesländer*), acting in coordination with the Federal Ministry of the Interior, are empowered to issue general admission orders that grant immediate, stable residence permits to specific nationalities or defined ethnic and religious minorities on the basis of urgent humanitarian need or to safeguard the geopolitical interests of the Federal Republic. Applied to protect vulnerable populations fleeing Syria and Afghanistan, this provision functions as a critical legislative safeguard, removing vulnerable groups from the legal precarity of the temporary suspension status (*Duldung*).

Given Germany's position as the primary safe-haven for the European Yazidi diaspora, approximately 250,000 individuals, with major communities established in Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia, rights advocates argue that Berlin's historical obligations cannot be fulfilled through symbolic gestures alone. Because the Islamic State targeted the Yazidis with the explicit intent of complete cultural and physical erasure, rather than mere territorial displacement, forced returns directly threaten the community's collective survival,

not merely the safety of the individuals (Piecha, 2024). To insulate this traumatised minority from the dangerous instability of domestic anti-immigration rhetoric, advocacy groups have called for an immediate federal freeze on all Yazidi expulsions, alongside the consistent application of Section 23 of the Residence Act (*AufenthG*, 2008) to grant these families permanent, non-revocable humanitarian status (Piecha, 2024). Despite the existence of these protective legal pathways, Germany's domestic political climate is becoming a more restrictive power, as explained previously caused by a rising anti-immigrant sentiment and electoral pressures, leading federal leadership to advocate for large-scale, accelerated expulsions (Höni, 2024; see Chapter 1). To operationalize this agenda, the federal government pursued bilateral, non-contractual migration agreements with the Iraqi government to streamline the administrative mechanisms necessary to operate the forced returns (Höni, 2024). Such non-contractual agreements (often termed “declarations of intent”) are deliberately done to fall outside the definition of a treaty under Article 2(1)(a) of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (United Nations, 1969, art. 2(1)(a)), and so neither require parliamentary ratification under Article 59(2) of the German Basic Law (Deutscher Bundestag, 1949, art. 59(2)), nor generate binding obligations, enforceable under international law. This legal informality allows the German government the flexibility in implementation, depriving affected individuals, including Yazidi returnees, of any direct legal basis to challenge the agreement's application before domestic or international courts.

So following these recent bilateral declarations of intent and the non-contractual agreements negotiated between Berlin and Baghdad, however, German authorities dismantled the protective parameters for Iraqi Yazidis. Driven by a newfound administrative willingness within Iraq to accept returnees, the German state has rapidly accelerated its repatriation procedures, evidenced by a rise in the issuing of passport replacement documents (*Passersatzpapiere*): German authorities secured 135 such travel authorisations in the first half of 2023 alone, compared to a combined total of just 20 across the whole of 2021 and 2022 (Pro Asyl, 2023). Human rights organisations argue that executing these forced returns to Iraq violates fundamental humanitarian principles. Deportees are returned to a state characterised by endemic judicial corruption, arbitrary detention, systematic torture, and an accelerating climate crisis in which severe droughts have cut off roughly half the population from access to clean drinking water (Pro Asyl, 2023).

In January 2023, the German *Bundestag* formally voted to classify the Islamic State's 2014 campaign against the Yazidis as genocide, explicitly pledging to protect Yazidi life both domestically and globally (*Deutscher Bundestag*, 2023). Yet this gesture of recognition did not translate into durable legal protection. Shortly after the resolution, German domestic administrative courts issued contradictory rulings, declaring that generalised, group-specific persecution of Yazidis in Iraq had effectively ceased: a judicial reclassification that almost immediately cleared the way for individual federal states to carry out rapid and largely unannounced deportations of thoroughly integrated Yazidi families who had resided in Germany for years (Pro Asyl, 2023). This structural policy change struck the Yazidi community with particular force: by early 2026, investigative reporting documented that fluent, German-speaking Yazidi youth who had grown up within the German educational system were being forcibly removed and sent back to live in destitute, concrete displacement camps near Mosul, left stranded in a legal and social limbo (The New Arab Staff, 2026).

This is a process of desecuritization, as originally conceptualized by Wæver (1995), which refers to the process by which an issue is moved out of the exceptional logic of security and returned to the realm of normal politics, where it can once again be addressed through ordinary, procedures rather than with emergency measures (Wæver, 1995). Both securitization and desecuritization, in this classical model, are discursive and public processes, so they occur through explicit speech acts and are (at least in principle) open to political debate. achieved not by speech, but by silence: fear and vulnerability were re-negotiated downward through bureaucratic channels, because doing so avoided the costs of contesting the *Bundestag*'s own genocide recognition in public, so the withdrawal of protections for the Yazidis occurred not through any comparable public announcement or political debate, but through quite administrative and judicial mechanisms, court rulings reclassifying risk, accelerated bilateral processing of travel documents, and state-level deportation decisions taken with minimal visibility. The result is a strong contradiction at the heart of German policy, a state that formally affirms a genocide on the floor of parliament, while simultaneously dismantling, case by case and out of the public view, the practical protections that the recognition would seem to imply.

The legal stakes of this development are considerable and connect directly to the *non-refoulement* obligations, central to international refugee law. The areas to which these

families are being returned correspond to the kind of unstable, insecure environments that *non-refoulement* protections under Article 33 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (United Nations, 1951) and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe, 1950) are specifically designed to guard against. If the insecurity documented by Pro Asyl persists in these areas (Pro Asyl, 2023), the deportations raise a direct and largely unaddressed non-refoulement question: are these removals compatible with Germany's binding obligations under both EU and international refugee law, or do they represent precisely the type of administrative circumvention of protection obligations that human rights bodies have repeatedly flagged in other contexts of EU externalisation and return policy (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019)?

3.2.2 External Stabilization vs Internal Exclusion: The Federal Strategy

The domestic judicial stance, denying refuge inside Germany, contrasts with the German Federal Foreign Office's (*Auswärtiges Amt*) extensive, externalized humanitarian operations in and across Iraq. From an international assistance perspective, Berlin positions itself as a primary global benefactor for the reconstruction of the Yazidi homeland, actively financing stabilization programs to make post-genocide Iraq a survivable environment (Federal Foreign Office, 2023). Through international intermediaries, like the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Federal Foreign Office directly funds mechanisms enabling survivors to apply for financial restitution via the Iraqi Yazidi Survivors Law (Federal Foreign Office, 2023).

Furthermore, German external policy explicitly targets the extensive physical and social devastation left by IS: the Federal Foreign Office has extended a 500-million-euro credit facility to Iraq, alongside a dedicated Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS), routing resources directly into the Sinjar region to reconstruct foundational infrastructure, including electric grids, sewer systems, and educational facilities (Federal Foreign Office, 2023).

To counter the deliberate contamination of civilian spaces by active combatants, German aid finances mine-clearance teams via the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to neutralize hidden booby-traps in abandoned homes (Federal Foreign Office, 2023; Höni, 2024). Additionally, federal funds subsidize localized psychological rehabilitative projects via the Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights, to address severe trauma, support children born from

wartime sexual violence, and underwrite international investigative bodies like UNITAD to exhume mass graves and document IS atrocities (Federal Foreign Office, 2023).

3.2.3 The 2025 Brandenburg Precedent and Procedural Irregularities

The practical implications of this heightened enforcement regime culminated in a prominent public case that happened in mid-2025. During a coordinated repatriation operation, a charter flight from Leipzig to Baghdad deported 43 Iraqi nationals (Connor, 2025a), but while initial reports from regional authorities claimed the flight was reserved solely for unattached, adult males (specifically, those with past criminal convictions), the manifest privately included a Yazidi family with four minor children who had lived for years in Lychen, Brandenburg (Connor, 2025a, 2025b).

This deportation exposed a very serious, life-changing systemic failure regarding the relationship between institutional communication and its legal timing. In fact, prior to the aircraft taking off, the family's legal representative filed an urgent motion with the Potsdam Administrative Court and on July 22, 2025, the tribunal ruled in the family's favor, retroactively removing their legal obligation to leave Germany (Connor, 2025a, 2025b). However, because the written text of the court order was finalized and delivered only while the aircraft was mid-flight, local immigration authorities claimed they were physically unable to intervene before the family arrived in Baghdad (Connor, 2025a). This incident provoked significant resistance from Brandenburg's Interior Minister, Rene Wilke, who argued that the family's removal violated basic principles of legal compliance (Connor, 2025a). Wilke directed state-level departments to collaborate with federal officials to coordinate the family's immediate re-entry, an initiative that required federal agencies to recognize the court's protective order and issue emergency travel documents (Connor, 2025a).

However, this political intervention was permanently halted by a definitive judicial review. In August 2025, the Potsdam Administrative Court officially denied an emergency application for the family's return (Connor, 2025b). The bench ruled that the initial deportation remained valid, under an existing March 2023 decision by the BAMF, which had dismissed the family's protection claims as "manifestly unfounded". The court held that because the original removal order had been enforceable since 2023, so the delayed delivery of the July 22 injunction did not create a right to re-entry (Connor, 2025b). Structurally, the

judges concluded that the family failed to show a specific, individualized threat from IS remnants and declared that there was insufficient evidence of active and collective persecution against the Yazidi population in Iraq (Connor, 2025b).

While the Federal Foreign Office emphasizes that its diplomatic engagement has helped nearly five million internally displaced persons return home since 2014, human rights advocates and legal scholars identify a fundamental contradiction between Germany's external aid philosophy and its domestic immigration practices (Connor, 2025a; Federal Foreign Office, 2023; Höni, 2024). Official federal data acknowledges that over 1.2 million citizens remain internally displaced within Iraq, with hundreds of thousands of Yazidis stuck in temporary displacement camps, where a dignified standard of living cannot be guaranteed (Federal Foreign Office, 2023; Höni, 2024).

Advocacy networks note that the Brandenburg deportation is indicative of a systemic trend rather than an isolated mistake, as multiple integrated Yazidi families across Germany have recently received identical removal notices (Connor, 2025a). Critics argue that by accelerating forced deportations, while simultaneously labeling the region as an active humanitarian crisis zone requiring hundreds of millions of euros in reconstruction loans, the German state operates through a double standard (Connor, 2025a). Because the original campaign against the Yazidis sought their total physical and cultural erasure, forcing these families out of Western societies and back into a landscape defined by ongoing instabilities and insecurities, and regional militia violence, directly threatens their collective survival (Connor, 2025a; Federal Foreign Office, 2023; Höni, 2024).

3.3 Impact on Human Rights Protections and Human Security Perceptions

This section examines how administrative, political, and social conditions in Germany shape the human rights protections and human security perceptions of the Yazidi community, drawing on two interviews conducted for this research, alongside an anonymous online survey of seven (N=7) self-identified members of the Yazidi community living in Germany. The first interview was conducted with Thikran Mato, a survivor of the 2014 Yazidi genocide, human rights advocate, and director of the *Nobody's Listening* initiative, an art exhibition project that uses virtual reality and immersive storytelling document survivors' testimony. The second interview was conducted with Walad Kiret, a 23-year-old member of

the executive board of the North Rhine-Westphalia branch of the *Yazidische Jugend Deutschland* (Yazidi Youth Germany), who was born and raised in Cologne to parents who arrived in Germany in the 1990s. Read together, these two stories, one centered on genocide memory and international advocacy, the other on second-generation identity and domestic youth organising can provide complementary points on how Yazidis in Germany today live through questions of memory, institutional trust, and social inclusion.

3.3.1 Memory, Identity and Integration in Germany

For survivors of the 2014 genocide, integration into German society coexists with an unresolved and continuing relationship to loss, and trauma. Thikran Mato described the condition of many Yazidis in Germany as one of living “between two contrasting realities”: one building a stable and secure life, while still carrying the trauma of genocide and uncertainty about relatives who remain missing or at risk in Iraq. His *Nobody's Listening* initiative was conceived specifically to address the way the public discourse tends to flatten genocide into statistics, or mere political language, using virtual reality instead to give visitors a realistic sense of presence through a lived testimony, which he considers essential for conveying the emotional depth and the human dimensions of survival, displacement and resilience that conventional reporting tend to overlook.

On the other side, Kiret's experience is the one of a person growing up in Germany, rather than arriving as a refugee, implying a different but somewhat related dimension of memory and identity: the difficulty, for second-generation Yazidis, of settling on a stable sense of self. He recalled being raised bilingually in Kurmanji and Arabic, and described struggling as a child with the question of whether he was “only” Yazidi, or also German, or something else entirely. He situated 2014 as a genuine rupture in the community's relationship to visibility, because prior to the genocide, he said, most Yazidi families in Germany (including his own) actively avoided disclosing their ethno-religious identity to outsiders, precisely to prevent having to explain or justify who they were to the usually curious, but albeit uninformed westerner, and it was only once global media coverage of the genocide made the Yazidi community known in Germany that avoiding disclosure was no longer possible.

“Until 2014, when nobody knew about us, we never told anybody that we are Yazidis, and therefore we had no problems, because nobody knew about us... after 2014, everybody

became aware, because you were in the news and everybody was talking about the genocide. And that was the point when everything changed, and we had to tell people that we are Yazidis.” - Walad Kiret

Kiret tied this same rupture to a parallel and ongoing struggle which entails questions around identity, over naming the community's language, so whether it should be called Kurmanji, Ezdiki, or simply Yazidi, which he described as a live internal debate over whether Yazidi identity is understood as a distinct ethno-religious identity or subsumed within a wider Kurdish one, a distinction some members, particularly those from Yazidi communities in the Caucasus. He connected the resolution of this identity uncertainty, for younger Yazidis today, to the growing visibility of Yazidi community organisations and social-media influencers, which now provide younger children with role models and a public affirmation that Yazidi identity is a legitimate and coherent one, rather than something invented or borrowed from other groups, a resource he says his own generation lacked.

The institutional recognition of the Yazidi struggle plays a comparable stabilising role at the collective level, as Mato credited the German state with having played an important part in formally recognising the Yazidi genocide and in supporting the survivors, which he said has helped raise awareness of the community's history. At the same time, he cautioned that ongoing German debates on migration, security, and international conflict continue to generate anxiety and uncertainty among migrant and refugee communities, Yazidis included, and that public understanding of the long-term, inter-generational consequences of genocide and displacement remains still quite limited. Consistent with this, 71% of the survey respondents (5 of 7) agreed that political or media debates about migration in Germany negatively affect their own life or that of their community, suggesting that concerns about the durability of memory and recognition are also accompanied by concerns about the insecurity surrounding the political climate in which that memory is held.

3.3.2 Institutional Trust and Procedural Fairness

In both interviews, Mato and Kiret point to a German institutional landscape that is positively looking at Yazidis specifically: Kiret described the general disposition of German politicians toward the Yazidi community, particularly in Lower Saxony, as extremely supporting, citing regular inclusion in official events and correspondence from regional government

representatives. He noted, with evident discomfort and sadness, that this favourable treatment is at times mentioned quite explicitly to the community's identity being non-Muslim, gaining sympathy for this also from the far-right *Alternative für Deutschland* towards Yazidi asylum seekers, made exactly on the grounds that Yazidis are not Muslim and therefore, in the party's own framing, not associated with terrorism, a form of conditional acceptance that Kiret regards as troubling precisely because of the anti-Muslim logic it relies on.

“They also do that... they were saying they are against [deportations]... and the main aspect was that we are not Muslims, and therefore we are better than them... which is so wrong on so many levels.” - Walad Kiret

On deportation policy specifically, Kiret described a split between regional and federal authorities: several German states, including Thuringia, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Lower Saxony, have formally opposed the deportation of Yazidis to Iraq, and his organisation has submitted position papers and held meetings with regional politicians to reinforce this position, with the Green Party described as the most consistently supportive and the SPD and CDU as less responsive. He identified the federal government as the primary source of continued deportation risk, despite this regional-level consensus, indicating a divisive and, from the community's perspective, unpredictable distribution of protection, depending on which level of the German state is making the relevant decision.

Another source of legal vulnerability concerns the residence status itself. Kiret explained that Yazidis who travel back to Iraq, typically to visit relatives can trigger a review of their asylum status upon return, on the reasoning that such travel is inconsistent with a continuous need for protection; even where this review results in the withdrawal of asylum status, he noted, affected individuals are generally granted an alternative residence permit rather than being deported out of the blue. He described a considerably more precarious situation, though, for Yazidis who arrived in Germany after 2019 without having been granted asylum, who instead remain on the temporary “toleration” (*Duldung*) status that does not permit employment, producing what he characterised as a self-reinforcing constraint, since the absence of the right to work also excludes the possibility to take the necessary steps to a more secure residence title.

This unevenly distributed sense of legal security is shown also in the survey data: while 71% of respondents (5 of 7) reported feeling respected by German institutions, such as schools,

public offices, and authorities, a substantial 57% (4 of 7) reported having felt worried about their legal status or about migration controls at some point. Read alongside Kiret's testimony, this result suggests that positive institutional respect at the level of everyday interaction does not fully create the anxiety generated by a multi-level administration system, in which legal security can depend on which German state, or which residence category, an individual happens to fall under.

3.3.3 Social Inclusion and Access to Resources

On social inclusion and access to resources, survey respondents reported way less confidence in their access to core services than in most other areas measured: only 43% (3 of 7) felt they had full access to basic rights in Germany, including education, healthcare, employment, and public services, which is the lowest share recorded across all six survey items, and notably lower than the 71% who reported feeling generally safe or respected by institutions. This gap suggests that perceived safety and institutional courtesy do not necessarily translate into a corresponding sense of full, unimpeded access to the practical entitlements of social inclusion.

Both interviews mention their community self-organisation as a response to this kind of lacks, particularly in the area of psychosocial support. Kiret described how, in the absence of any formal counselling infrastructure in his own organisation, members have developed an informal culture of mutual support, in which conversations about difficult experiences, including episodes of online harassment following the misreported 2019 murder of a young Yazidi woman in Germany, arise spontaneously in group settings and meetings, rather than through public services. He also remembered the work of a telephone counselling service, operated by a partner company for youth as a model that his own initiative could aspire to, but has not yet been able to replicate, given its limited financial resources.

“Unfortunately, unlike other organisations, we don't have a real counsellor who could help... [the partner organisation] now has a telephone number where you can call as a child, as a youth, and they will help you, they will consult you... that's something we aspire to do as well.” - Walad Kiret

Mato's initiative works on a different scale, but responds to a structurally similar void: the absence, in mainstream public discourses, of the adequate space for survivors to process and

communicate trauma in their own terms. He described art, and specifically the immersive format of virtual reality, as a means by which survivors can testify and process trauma in ways that conventional documentation usually does not easily accommodate, and stressed that Yazidi survivors and artists are there placed at the center of the initiative's design, rather than just being represented through external actors or institutions.

Access to institutional resources is nonetheless not completely absent, and in Kiret's words it can be successfully secured. On this point he said that the *Yazidische Jugend Deutschland's* North Rhine-Westphalia branch received several years of funding, between 2018 and 2021, through a regional Interior Ministry program requiring newer initiatives to partner with an established one, a structure that Kiret credited with providing both financial support and institutional legitimacy during the branch's early years of growth. He underlined this aspect, of his organisation's independence from foreign political financing, unlike some other Yazidi communities in Germany that he described as being linked to political actors in Iraq or Turkey, (from which they receive external funding) is a deliberate choice that has helped build relatives' and overall community trust, including his own family's.

4. Analysis of Findings

The previous chapters examined first, the theoretical and legal architecture through which migration to Europe and to Germany has become progressively securitized (Chapter 1), and second the two empirical case studies: Russian nationals in Munich, subjects of a new, administrative vetting requirement (Chapter 2), and the Iraqi Yazidi community, whose formal genocide recognition coexists with a deportation regime (Chapter 3). This chapter brings these into direct comparison, but rather than treating the two case studies as parallel but individual illustrations of securitization not connected into a wider picture, it uses the Copenhagen and Paris School frameworks introduced in Chapter 1 (Wæver, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998; Bigo, 2002) to ask what the two cases reveal, together, about how securitizing logics differentiate between groups, how they translate into distinct administrative and enforcement instruments, and how they are ultimately felt (or not) by the individuals concerned.

4.1 Comparing Logics of Securitization

Both case studies confirm the central proposition of securitization theory outlined in Chapter 1: that migration governance in contemporary Germany operates simultaneously through overt, discursive “securitizing moves”, of the kind theorised by the Copenhagen School, and through the everyday bureaucratic practices described by the Paris School (Wæver, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998; Bigo, 2002). Yet, the two communities examined in this thesis are securitized through different mechanisms, and, notably, in opposite discursive directions. Russian nationals are the object of an explicit, state-level securitizing move: their nationality is treated as a proxy for geopolitical risk, formalised through the federal regulation that made mandatory security interviews compulsory for Russian nationals applying for long-term residence, work authorisation, or family reunification from 31 March 2025 onward (Serdiukov, 2025), a measure situated within a wider domestic security climate created by espionage prosecutions, including the Munich trial of dual nationals accused of plotting sabotage against German military logistics (Connolly, 2025, as discussed in Chapter 2).

The Yazidi case, by contrast, illustrates what might be termed desecuritization (Wæver, 1995), but in reverse: whereas the Copenhagen School's model assumes desecuritization occurs through the same public, discursive mechanism as securitization itself, here the outcome (the withdrawal of exceptional protection) is achieved while the public, symbolic register (the

Bundestag's genocide recognition) remains, at least formally, untouched, because avoiding an open contestation of that recognition is less costly than reversing it. To conclude, a protective, humanitarian discourse present in the German *Bundestag*'s formal recognition of the 2014 genocide in January 2023 (Deutscher Bundestag, 2023), has not translated into durable protection, and has in practice been undermined through administrative and judicial re-classification, rather than through any public reversal of the genocide recognition itself, it was sufficient that domestic courts' declarations generalised the persecution of Yazidis in Iraq to be "effectively ceased", allowing to clear the way for state-level deportations of well-integrated families, with minimal public visibility (Pro Asyl, 2023). Where the Russian case exemplifies securitization as a loud, formally announced administrative innovation, the Yazidi case exemplifies the erosion of protection through silence, precisely because avoiding public contestation of the *Bundestag*'s own genocide vote carries lower political cost than an open reversal would. Both processes nonetheless share the same underlying logic identified by the Copenhagen School: fear and vulnerability are renegotiated, upward for one group and downward for the other, primarily through administrative and bureaucratic channels rather than through ordinary and individualised political decision (Wæver, 1995; Williams, 2011).

4.1.1 Administrative vs Enforcement Measures

The axis of comparison between the two case studies concerns where, along the spectrum from administrative gatekeeping to physical enforcement, each community's securitisation is concentrated. The Russian case is, in Matthew Gibney's (2013) and Kaushal's (2023) terms as introduced in Chapter 1, primarily a matter of externally coercive control: the security interview functions as a gatekeeping step attached to the renewal or continuation of lawful residence, imposing a procedural and somehow confused burden but not, in M.'s case, resulting in expulsion or any comparable loss of physical liberty. The costs M. described, a general notification letter, a lengthy questionnaire and a language gap between the interview's requirements and its practicalities are real, but they remain within the register of administrative friction (as reported in Chapter 2).

The Yazidi case sits at the opposite, internally coercive end of this spectrum. Deportation, as Gibney (2013) argues, is arguably the clearest case of forced migration precisely because it is driven entirely by the direct exercise of state power against individuals already present and lawfully settled on a state's territory. This is visible with the example of the 2025

Brandenburg precedent, discussed in Chapter 3 (Connor, 2025a, 2025b). Kaushal's (2023) distinction between immigration as externally coercive and deportation as internally coercive, exercised "without sufficient justification" against individuals already subject to the state's laws while excluded from its liberal protections, captures precisely what separates this case from the Russian one: the Yazidi family was not being kept out, but forcibly removed from a life already built in Germany.

4.1.2 Political Discourses and Community-Specific Policies

The two case studies also diverge on the political discourse surrounding them, in ways that complicate any assumption that a positive rhetoric protects a community from securitized enforcement. As Chapter 1 documents, Chancellor Merz's October 2025 remarks linking "problems in the cityscape" to migration and deportations (Deutschlandfunk, 2025; Thureau, 2025) state a generalised, undifferentiated securitizing discourse that treats irregular or non-integrated migrants collectively as a threat to public safety, a discourse that does not distinguish by community of origin and that has provided the political backdrop against which enforcement targets for regional *Ausländerbehörden*, including those executing Yazidi deportations, have intensified (Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 2025).

Kiret's account of the Yazidi community's specific standing within German political discourse presents an almost inverse picture: he described German politicians, particularly in Lower Saxony, as consistently positive toward Yazidis, and even noted that the far-right Alternative für Deutschland has publicly opposed Yazidi deportations. Yet, as Kiret himself observed with evident discomfort, this favourable treatment is explicitly grounded in the community's non-Muslim identity, an instance of the same securitization of migration discussed in Chapter 1, whereby Muslim identity and extremist violence are merged into a single threat category (Brubaker, 2017).

"They also do that... they were saying we are against [deportations] and the main reason was because we are not Muslims, and therefore we are better than them... which is so wrong on so many levels." - Walad Kiret

This reveals that the Yazidi community's treatment is not an exception to migration securitization, but rather a by-product of it: Yazidis are constructed as the acceptable,

“deserving” counterpart, against which the securitized, undeserving Muslim migrant is implicitly defined, a hierarchy internal to the securitized migration field rather than a symbol of good faith and escape from it. Crucially, this discourse has not defended the community from enforcement, precisely because, as Kiret noted, deportation risk is driven primarily by the federal government rather than by regional or party-political sentiment and because the general acceleration of deportations political climate (see Chapter 1) operates independently of community-specific political sympathy. This is consistent with the Paris School’s core claim, that routine bureaucratic and enforcement practice, rather than public political speech, is frequently the more decisive site of securitization (Bigo, 2002).

The Russian case illustrates a different variant of this same dynamic: public discourse here is far more directly and explicitly securitizing, tied to state-level espionage and internal sabotage narratives (Connolly, 2025; Connor, 2026; Thureau, 2026, as discussed in Chapter 2), yet the resulting policy response has, thus far, remained concentrated in the administrative step rather than escalating to enforcement.

4.1.3 Differential Impacts on Human Rights Protections

Inserted onto the human rights framework set out in Chapter 1, the two case studies engage different registers of protection, corresponding to the administrative/enforcement distinction developed above. The Russian security interview primarily raises questions of non-discrimination and procedural fairness under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNGA, 1966a, 1966b): the measure applies a differentiated administrative burden on the basis of nationality alone, independent of individualised risk indicators, in tension with the principle that fundamental rights (including the right to fair and transparent administrative treatment), are not conditional on citizenship status. Because the measure does not (at least in the case examined) result in expulsion, it does not directly engage the guarantees of international refugee and human rights law, though the interview’s ambiguity in the details, described in Chapter 2 as producing pre-interview anxiety, does not sit well with the expectations regarding notice and transparency in administrative proceedings (UNGA, 1966a, Article 14).

The Yazidi case, by contrast, engages the strictest guarantees available under both

international and European human rights law. Article 33 of the 1951 Refugee Convention and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights together establish an absolute, non-derogable prohibition on returning individuals to territories where they face a real risk of persecution or inhuman treatment, a prohibition that, unlike most Convention rights, permits no balancing test against state interests, including national security or migration control (Addo & Grief, 1998; Rudolf, 1998, as discussed in Chapter 1). The Bavarian and Brandenburg deportations documented in Chapter 3 return families to a Sinjar region that Pro Asyl and Wadi's (2024) own reporting describes as remaining a volatile, infrastructurally devastated environment, raising the unresolved question as to whether these removals are compatible with Germany's binding *non-refoulement* obligations, or whether they constitute precisely the kind of administrative circumvention of protection duties that human rights bodies have flagged in other externalisation contexts (Carrera, Santos Vara & Strik, 2019).

A further point of comparison concerns reversibility: the costs imposed on Russian nationals by the security interview, procedural delay, anxiety, the burden of arranging interpretation, are significant but, in principle, recoverable because the underlying residence status is not permanently foreclosed by the process itself. The costs imposed on deported Yazidi families are, by contrast, largely irreversible in practice, as the Brandenburg case demonstrates: once physically removed, subsequent legal victories, or even a change in the underlying facts, may arrive too late, or be discounted as legally insufficient, to secure one's return to Germany (Connor, 2025b). These variations in reversibility are not captured by the practices of "securitization" alone and suggest that comparative analysis of migration governance should attend not only to whether a group is securitized, but to which stage of the migration and residence process that securitization is applied, since the human rights stakes are decisively higher once a securitizing logic moves from screening entry or renewal to actually authorising a physical removal.

4.2 Human Security Perceptions Across Groups

Survey indicator	Russian nationals in Munich (N=11)	Yazidi community in Germany (N=7)
Generally feel safe in Germany	100% (11/11)	71% (5/7)
Feel respected by German institutions	82% (9/11)	71% (5/7)

Feel full access to basic rights (education, healthcare, work, public services)	82% (9/11)	43% (3/7)
Report differential or unfair treatment due to nationality/background	55% (6/11)	57% (4/7)
Report worry/stress linked to legal status or security procedures	55% (6/11)	57% (4/7)
Report that political or media debates negatively affect their life	27% (3/11)	71% (5/7)

Table 1 (six indicators of the two anonymous surveys)

The survey data collected for both case studies allow a direct (if approximate) comparison of how these differing legal and administrative exposures are experienced. Table 1 summarises the six comparable indicators collected across the two anonymous surveys. Read together, these figures complicate any straightforward assumption that harsher legal and enforcement exposure produces lower perceived security in proportion. Russian respondents, despite being the explicit target of a state-level security narrative tied to espionage and hybrid-warfare concerns, report categorically higher baseline safety (100% versus 71%) and somewhat higher institutional respect (82% versus 71%) than Yazidi respondents, whose community benefits from formal genocide recognition and an overall more sympathetic political representation. The most striking difference concerns the access to basic rights: only 43% of Yazidi respondents (3 of 7), the lowest figure recorded across either survey, reported feeling they had full access to education, healthcare, employment, and public services, against 82% of Russian respondents (9 of 11). This gap can be consistent with the legal precarity documented in Chapter 3, particularly the employment-barring “toleration” (*Duldung*) status affecting Yazidis who arrived after 2019, a structural vulnerability with no direct equivalent among the economically established Russian respondents in this study, most of whom, like M., arrived with stable employment residence permits.

A second, closely related reversal concerns the perceived impact of political and media discourse: 71% of Yazidi respondents (5 of 7) reported that political or media debates negatively affect their life or community, against just 27% of Russian respondents (3 of 11), despite Russian nationals being the more explicit subject of hostile geopolitical discourse documented in this thesis. This pattern is consistent with the asymmetry described in section 4.1.2: the generalised anti-immigration political climate that most directly threatens Yazidis is not specifically about them, and therefore offers them no shelter despite their community’s

specific standing, whereas the discourse specifically targeting Russians, however hostile can be, is more geopolitical in character and, as M.'s own account suggests, can be psychologically distanced from one's personal situation when one's own political views (opposition to the invasion of Ukraine) are perceived to align with the surrounding majority. Additionally, the depersonalising interpretation of a measure as a standard bureaucratic requirement, rather than an act of individual suspicion, appears to function as a protective factor for M.'s own sense of security, even though the measure remains, in strictly legal terms, a differentiated administrative burden applied by nationality.

Framed through the human security concept introduced in Chapter 1 and further expanded in Chapter 2 through the two freedoms (freedom from fear as well as freedom from want) introduced by Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" speech (Johnson, 1987; Cassese, 1990), the two case studies appear to represent almost inverse configurations of vulnerability. For Russian nationals, freedom from want, material and economic security, remains intact, while a new, specifically administrative dimension of fear has been added on top of it through the security interview requirement. For Yazidis, by contrast, the material dimension of human security, access to rights, employment, and stable residence status, is where vulnerability concentrates most sharply, compounding a form of fear rooted not in a single bureaucratic encounter but in the ongoing possibility of forced removal from a life already built in Germany. Both patterns nonetheless converge on the same account offered, from a practitioner's vantage point, by GIZ Iraq's Dr. Katerina Kratzmann: that human rights framing, whether invoked to justify a security interview's exceptions, a genocide recognition's protective implications, or an asylum procedures fairness, exerts markedly less practical constraint on state behaviour today than the sector's own rhetoric of two decades ago would suggest. The comparison developed across this chapter suggests that this erosion is not uniform and that it is distributed unevenly across communities and stages of the migration process, producing the differentiated logics of securitization that this thesis' aim is to trace.

Conclusion

This thesis' goal was to answer a fairly simple question, with a complicated answer: does migration securitization in Germany work the same way for everyone it touches? The short answer, based on everything gathered across the preceding chapters, is no, not even close. Russian nationals and Yazidis in Germany are both, in different ways, caught up in the wider logic of securitization of migration governance, but they are caught up in it through almost entirely different mechanisms, with almost entirely different consequences, and, as the interviews and surveys in this thesis show, they experience it in almost entirely different ways too.

Chapter 1 traced how migration in Germany and the European Union has moved, gradually but consistently, from being treated as a humanitarian and economic issue toward being treated as a security issue, using the Copenhagen and Paris School frameworks (Wæver, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998; Bigo, 2002) to explain both the loud, political speeches and the more quiet, everyday bureaucratic practices that do the same work more, just more subtly. Chapter 2 showed what this looks like for Russian nationals in Munich: a new, mandatory security interview, introduced from March 2025 and applied on the basis of nationality alone, which M. described as vague and initially frightening, but which the survey data suggests has not, at least so far, translated into a broader loss of trust in German institutions, most respondents still reported feeling safe and respected, even as a majority also reported real stress connected to the procedure itself.

In contrast, Chapter 3 told a very different story: despite Germany's own parliament formally recognised the 2014 Yazidi genocide in 2023, Yazidi families, including ones who have been deported, sometimes through procedures that failed even on their own terms, as the 2025 Brandenburg case shows, where a court order protecting a family arrived only after their plane had already left for Baghdad (Connor, 2025a, 2025b). At the same time, the interviews with Kiret, Mato, and GIZ's Dr. Kratzmann painted a picture of a community that is, in many respects, treated warmly at the level of everyday politics, but structurally undermined by fragmented advocacy, diverse legal protection between different German states and a federal deportation push that does not appear to consider that sympathy at all.

Chapter 4 synthesised these two stories and found, essentially, a kind of set of two mirror images: where Russians face a preventive, administrative form of securitization, Yazidis face an enforcement one, and where Russians face openly hostile political discourse but possible bureaucratic consequences, Yazidis face a positive attitude towards them, but much harsher consequences on the ground. Moreover, where the survey data shows Russian respondents reporting very high safety and access to rights, but real anxiety around one specific bureaucratic procedure, Yazidi respondents reported the reverse: relatively lower (but still substantial) safety and institutional trust, alongside the lowest score recorded in either survey on access to basic rights. Read together, these findings suggest that securitization in Germany is not a single, uniform process that simply gets “turned on” for unpopular groups, but it is something closer to a set of separate logics, administrative and enforcement-based, that can combine differently depending on a community’s specific history, their legal status, and the relationship to the German state, sometimes producing outcomes that have very little to do with how that community is actually talked about in public.

A few practical recommendations follow from this research: firstly, the security interview procedure for Russian nationals would benefit from clearer, more detailed advance information, so that applicants are not left (as M. was) to guess what the interview will actually involve and simply explaining the process in the initial letter in a more clear way would likely reduce a significant amount of unnecessary anxiety and economic preparation without changing the substance of the screening itself. Second, the kind of procedural failure seen in the Brandenburg case, points to a need for a mandatory automatic stay on removals whenever a legal challenge is pending, rather than leaving the outcome to depend on the timing of a fax or an email. Third, Section 23 of the Residence Act, which already allows German states to grant group-based humanitarian protection, should be applied to the Yazidi community consistently and durably, rather than being left to vary by state and by the political attitude towards them. Fourth, the fragmentation among Yazidi advocacy organisations as described by Dr. Kratzmann, worsened by funding structures that put these organisations in competition with each other, is something international donors and German ministries alike could address directly by rethinking how that funding is ultimately allocated. Finally, both communities studied here would likely benefit from better-resourced psychosocial support: Kiret spoke openly about his own organisation lacking anything like a

proper counselling service, and something similar could be said for Russian nationals navigating a stressful and unfamiliar bureaucratic process, alone.

This thesis also presents real, tangible limits: the two surveys are small and self-selected and cannot be treated as statistically representative of either community, they are best read as an indication of a range of experiences, but not a precise measurement of one. As discussed in the methodology chapter, the two case studies also ended up resting on data of quite different depth and character, one anonymised interview for the Russian case against two named interviews plus a practitioner interview for the Yazidi case, a direct consequence of the very different levels of trust and suspicion encountered during fieldwork. This thesis is also, inevitably, a snapshot of a fast-moving legal picture: the European Union's Common European Asylum System reform only became fully applicable in the middle of 2026, right as this research was being finished, and both the Russian security interview policy and Germany's approach to Yazidi deportations could well look different with time.

The research would additionally benefit from personal accounts of legal practitioners accustomed to the field of security and migration policies, as well as from testimonies and views from politicians representing different positions for valuable comparisons of the outcomes. A logical next step would also be to repeat this kind of survey with a larger, more representative sample. It would also be valuable to track both case studies forward in time, particularly to see how Germany's transposition of the new EU asylum framework, applicable from June 2026, actually changes practice on the ground once the transition period is over. Beyond these two specific communities, the same comparative framework used in this thesis, comparing administrative versus enforcement logics, discourse versus outcome, and human rights impact versus lived perception, could usefully be applied to other nationalities currently navigating Germany's security-ed migration system (Afghans or Iranians, for example) each of whom stands in a different relationship to German political discourse and legal protection. Finally, Dr. Kratzmann's own closing reflection in her interview, on whether human rights arguments still carry any real weight in a policy environment increasingly shaped by geopolitical competition rather than protection norms, deserves to be taken seriously as a research question in its own right, well beyond the scope of this particular thesis. If this research has shown anything, it is that the answer to that question is not the

same for every community it is asked about, and that finding it out requires actually asking the people who experience it.

Bibliography

- Addo, M. K., & Grief, N. (1998). Does Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights enshrine absolute rights? *European Journal of International Law*, 9(3), 510–524.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/9.3.510>
- Al Jazeera Staff. (2026, April 29). Kazakh man accused of spying for Russia arrested in Germany. *Al Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/29/kazakh-man-accused-of-spying-for-russia-arrested-in-germany>
- Amnesty International. (2014). *Ethnic cleansing on a historic scale: Islamic State's systematic targeting of minorities in northern Iraq*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/mde140112014en.pdf>
- Amnesty International. (2018, October 11). *A leadership test for the EU*.
<https://amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2018/05/eu-dublin-iii-regulation-asylum-system-reform>
- Amnesty International. (2024, April). *EU: Migration and Asylum Pact reforms will put people at heightened risk of human rights violations*.
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/eu-migration-and-asylum-pact-reforms-will-put-people-at-heightened-risk-of-human-rights-violations/>
- Amnesty International. (2025, December 18). *EU: New rules on asylum and 'safe countries' undermine the foundation of refugee protection*.
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/12/eu-new-rules-on-asylum-and-safe-countries-undermine-the-foundation-of-refugee-protection/>
- Ancite-Jepifánova, A. (2026, January 23). 'We ran from monsters': Once welcomed by Germany after IS genocide, Yazidis are now deported to a life of limbo in refugee camps. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/we-ran-from-monsters-once-welcomed-by-germany-after-is-genocide-yazidis-are-now-deported-to-a-life-of-limbo-in-refugee-camps-272533>
- Asatryan, G., & Arakalova, V. (2002). *The ethnic minorities of Armenia*. Minorities Network.
<http://www.minorities-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The-ethnic-minorities-of-Armenia.pdf>
- Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz [Asylum Seekers Benefits Act; AsylbLG], BGBl. I S. 1074 (1993, as amended) (Ger.). <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/asylblg/>
- Asylgesetz [Asylum Act; AsylG] (1992, as amended) (Ger.). https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/asylvfg_1992/
- Asylum Information Database. (2024). *Country report: Germany*. European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE). <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/germany/>

- Aufenthaltsgesetz [Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory (Residence Act); AufenthG], BGBI. I S. 162, § 23 (2004, as amended 2008) (Ger.). https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/aufenthg_2004/
- Auswärtiges Amt [Federal Foreign Office]. (2023, December 1). *Sinjar after the IS terror: How is the Federal Foreign Office supporting Yazidis in Iraq?* <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/laenderinformationen/irak-node/help-yazidis-2238004>
- Auswärtiges Amt [Federal Foreign Office]. (2026, March 19). *Germany and the Russian Federation: Bilateral relations.* <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/russianfederation-218616>
- BBC News. (2016, March 4). Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>
- Bell, B. (2026, March 30). Most Syrian refugees in Germany expected to return home in three years, Merz says. *BBC News.* <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy41vqx4pdzo>
- Benedek, W. (2005). Der Beitrag des Konzepts der menschlichen Sicherheit zur Friedenssicherung. In *Liber amicorum Jost Delbrück* (pp. 25-40). Duncker & Humblot.
- Bigo, D. (2002). Security and immigration: Toward a critique of the governmentality of unease. *Alternatives*, 27(1), 63–92.
- Bigo, D., & Tsoukala, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Terror, insecurity and liberty: Illiberal practices of liberal regimes after 9/11*. Routledge.
- Bitoulas, A. (2015). *Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications: 2014* (Statistics in Focus No. 3/2015). Eurostat, European Commission. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4168041/6742650/KS-QA-15-003-EN-N.pdf>
- Brotherton, D. C., & Barrios, L. (2009). Displacement and stigma: The social-psychological crisis of the deportee. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 5(1), 29–55.
- Brower, E. (2015, November 12). Migration flows and the reintroduction of internal border controls: Assessing necessity and proportionality. *EU Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy.* <https://eumigrationlawblog.eu/migration-flows-and-the-reintroduction-of-internal-border-controls-assessing-necessity-and-proportionality/>
- Brubaker, R. (2017). Why populism? *Theory and Society*, 46(5), 357–385.
- Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge [BAMF]. (2023). *The German asylum procedure: An overview of the stages of the procedure and the statutory regulations.* <https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Asyl/das-deutsche-asylverfahren.pdf>
- Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge [Federal Office for Migration and Refugees; BAMF]. (2016, December). *Migration report 2015: Central conclusions* [Migrationsbericht 2015: Zentrale Ergebnisse]. <https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Forschung/Migrationsberichte/migrationsbericht-2015-zentrale-ergebnisse.pdf>
- Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat [BMI]. (2024a, May 31). *Chancenkarte für gezielte*

Fachkräfteeinwanderung kommt [Opportunity Card for targeted skilled-worker immigration is coming]. <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/kurzmeldungen/DE/2024/05/chancenkarte.html>

Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat [BMI]. (2024b, June 27). *Neues Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht tritt in Kraft* [New nationality law enters into force]. <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2024/06/stag-inkraft.html>

Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat [BMI]. (2024c). *Sicherheitspaket: Maßnahmen zur Stärkung der inneren Sicherheit* [Security package: Measures to strengthen internal security]. <https://www.bmi.bund.de>

Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat [BMI]. (2025, September 18). *Bundeskabinett beschließt nationale Umsetzung des Gemeinsamen Europäischen Asylsystems* [Federal Cabinet adopts national implementation of the Common European Asylum System]. <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2025/09/geas-umsetzung.html>

Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat [BMI]. (2026). *The Common European Asylum System (CEAS)*. <https://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/topics/migration/common-european-asylum-system/common-european-asylum-system-node.html>

Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat [Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community; BMI]. (2023, November 8). *Bundesregierung beschließt Gesetzespaket zur Anpassung von Datenübermittlungsvorschriften im Ausländer- und Sozialrecht* [Federal government adopts legislative package amending data-transmission rules in foreigners' and social law]. <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2023/11/gesetzespaket.html>

Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales [Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; BMAS]. (2023, October 18). *Job-Turbo zur Arbeitsmarktintegration* [Job-Turbo for labour market integration]. <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Service/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2023/turbo-zur-arbeitsmarktintegration.html>

Bundesregierung [Federal Government of Germany]. (2026, April 29). *Germany implements Common European Asylum System*. <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/migration-ceas-2427060>

Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner.

Carrera, S., Santos Vara, J., & Strik, T. (Eds.). (2019). *Constitutionalising the external dimensions of EU migration policies in times of crisis: Legality, rule of law and fundamental rights reconsidered*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Cassese, A. (1990). *Human rights in a changing world*. Polity Press.

Ceccorulli, M. (2018). Back to Schengen: The collective securitisation of the EU free-border area. *West European Politics*.

Cheterian, V. (2019). ISIS genocide against the Yazidis and mass violence in the Middle East. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*.

- Connolly, K. (2025, May 20). Three men on trial in Germany accused of Russian sabotage plot. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/20/men-trial-germany-accused-russian-sabotage-plot>
- Connor, R. (2025a, July 25). Germany urged to reverse Yazidi family's removal to Iraq. *Deutsche Welle*. <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-urged-to-reverse-yazidi-familys-removal-to-iraq/a-73418483>
- Connor, R. (2025b, August 8). German court rejects deported Yazidi family's return. *Deutsche Welle*. <https://www.dw.com/en/german-court-rejects-deported-yazidi-familys-return/a-73566697>
- Connor, R. (2026, January 22). Germany expels Russian diplomat, summons ambassador over espionage case. *Deutsche Welle*. <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-expels-russian-diplomat-summons-ambassador-over-espionage-case/a-75609339>
- Coogle, A. (2023, May 17). The Iraqi government is failing victims of ISIS in Sinjar. *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/17/iraqi-government-failing-victims-isis-sinjar>
- Council of Europe. (1950). *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, as amended by Protocols Nos. 11 and 14 (ETS No. 5).
- Danish Refugee Council. (2026). *EU Pact on migration and asylum*. <https://asyl.drc.ngo/en/policy-and-recommendations/advocacy/european-asylum-and-migration-policy/eu-pact-on-migration-and-asylum/>
- de Haas, H., Castles, S., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world* (6th ed.). Red Globe Press.
- Deutscher Bundestag [German Bundestag]. (2023a, March 2). *Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Clara Büniger...* [Reply of the Federal Government to the minor interpellation of MP Clara Büniger and others] (Drucksache 20/5850). <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/058/2005850.pdf>
- Deutscher Bundestag. (2023b, January 19). *Plenarprotokoll 20/79: Stenografischer Bericht, 79. Sitzung* [Plenary minutes 20/79: Stenographic report, 79th session, including the resolution recognising the Islamic State's campaign against the Yazidis as genocide]. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/20/20079.pdf>
- Deutschlandfunk. (2025, October 23). *Merz' Problem mit dem „Stadtbeeld“* [Merz's problem with the "cityscape"]. <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/friedrich-merz-stadtbild-migration-diskussion-100.html>
- Di Pascale, A. (2026). Towards 12 June: Some progress but many delays in implementing the Pact on Migration and Asylum. *EU Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy*. <https://eumigrationlawblog.eu/towards-12-june-some-progress-but-many-delays-in-implementing-the-pact-on-migration-and-asylum/>

- European Commission. (2024a, May 21). *Pact on Migration and Asylum: A common EU system to manage migration*. Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en
- European Commission. (2024b, June 4). *Legislative files in a nutshell: Pact on Migration and Asylum*. Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum/legislative-files-nutshell_en
- European Commission. (2025, June 13). *Schengen governance*. Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/schengen/schengen-area/schengen-governance_en
- European Commission. (2026a). *Asylum in the EU*. Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/asylum-eu_en
- European Commission. (2026b, June 12). *New migration and asylum rules enter into application: What is changing?* Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/new-migration-and-asylum-rules-enter-application-what-changing-2026-06-12_en
- European Court of Human Rights. (2011). *M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece* (Application No. 30696/09).
- European Court of Human Rights. (2012). *Hirsi Jamaa and Others v. Italy* (Application No. 27765/09).
- European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2011). Directive 2011/95/EU of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection (recast) [Qualification Directive]. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 337, 9–26.
- European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2013a). Directive 2013/32/EU of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast) [Asylum Procedures Directive]. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 180, 60–95.
- European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2013b). Directive 2013/33/EU of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast) [Reception Conditions Directive]. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 180, 96–116.
- European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2013c). Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection (recast) [Dublin III Regulation]. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 180, 31–59.
- European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2021). Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 468, 1–54.

- European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2024a). Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of 14 May 2024 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast) [Reception Conditions Directive]. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L, 2024/1346.
- European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2024b). Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection [Qualification Regulation]. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L, 2024/1347.
- European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2024c). Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 of 14 May 2024 establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU [Asylum Procedures Regulation]. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L, 2024/1348.
- European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2024d). Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 of 14 May 2024 on asylum and migration management, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1147 and (EU) 2021/1060 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 [Asylum and Migration Management Regulation]. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L, 2024/1351.
- European Union Agency for Asylum [EUAA]. (2024). *Asylum Report 2024: Country overviews: Breakdown by country*. <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2024/31312-breakdown-country>
- European Union Agency for Asylum [EUAA]. (2026). *Latest asylum trends: Recognition rates*. <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/latest-asylum-trends-monthly-overview/recognition-rates>
- European Union. (2007). Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C306.
- European Union. (2012a). Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C326, 391–407.
- European Union. (2012b). Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (consolidated version). *Official Journal of the European Union*, C326, 47–390.
- Eurostat. (2016, March 4). *Asylum in the EU Member States: Record number of over 1.2 million first time asylum seekers registered in 2015; Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis: Top citizenships* (News Release No. 44/2016). European Commission. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf>
- Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz [Skilled Immigration Act; FEG], BGBl. I S. 1307 (2020, as amended 2023) (Ger.). <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/>
- Gibney, M. J. (2013). Is deportation a form of forced migration? *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 32(2), 116–129.
- Grappi, G., & Lucarelli, S. (2021). Bordering power Europe? The mobility-bordering nexus in and by the European Union. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*.

- Grasnick, B. (2025, October 17). Merz' Problem mit dem „Stadtbild“ [Merz's problem with the "cityscape"]. *Tagesschau*. <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/merz-stadtbild-migration-100.html>
- Greenberg, J. (2021). Counterpedagogy, sovereignty, and migration at the European Court of Human Rights. *Law & Social Inquiry*, 46(2), 518–539. <https://doi.org/10.1017/lsi.2020.40>
- Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland [Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany; GG] (1949, as amended) (Ger.). <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/gg/>
- Hessbruegge, J. (2012). The European Court of Human Rights: Hirsi Jamaa et al. v. Italy. *International Legal Materials*, 51(3), 423–476. <https://doi.org/10.5305/intelegamate.51.3.0423>
- Höni, J. (2024, February 5). Germany and the Yazidis – Going back on a promise? Why international law obligates Germany to stop deportations of Yazidis to Iraq. *Völkerrechtsblog*.
- Howard-Hassmann, R. E. (2012). Human security: Undermining human rights? *Human Rights Quarterly*, 34(1), 88–112. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2012.0004>
- Human Rights Watch. (2023, September 8). *Iraq: Security forces open fire on Kirkuk protesters*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/09/08/iraq-security-forces-open-fire-kirkuk-protesters>
- Human Rights Watch. (2026a, June 10). *EU: Harmful migration, asylum pact in full effect*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/06/10/eu-harmful-migration-asylum-pact-in-full-effect>
- Human Rights Watch. (2026b). *The impact of externalization of migration controls*. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/jmhs.pdf
- Huysmans, J. (2006). *The politics of insecurity: Fear, migration and asylum in the EU*. Routledge.
- International Law Commission, *Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, with Commentaries*, art. 16, U.N. Doc. A/56/10 (2001)
- International Organization for Migration [IOM]. (2022, August 4). *More support needed for survivors of the Sinjar massacre*. <https://www.iom.int/news/more-support-needed-survivors-sinjar-massacre>
- Johnson, M. G. (1987). The contributions of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt to the development of international protection for human rights. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 9(1), 19–48.
- Jones, T., dpa, AFP, Reuters, AP, epd, & KNA. (2025, October 22). Germany news: 'Daughters' protest after Merz remarks. *DW*. <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-news-daughters-protest-after-merz-remarks/live-74450891>
- Kaushal, A. (2023). From the inside out: The coercive power of deportation and the erosion of the liberal democratic state. *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 43(2), 350–378.
- Lanovoy, V. (2016). *Complicity and its limits in the law of international responsibility*. Introduction. Hart Publishing.

- Laschi, G. (2021). Movement but with limitations: Mobility in the process of European integration – freedom, identity, citizenship and exclusion. In *Europe between migrations, decolonization and integration (1945–1992)* (pp. 15-27). Routledge.
- Müller, P., & Slominski, P. (2021). Breaking the legal link but not the law? The externalization of EU migration control through orchestration in the Central Mediterranean. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(6), 801–820.
- Nadia's Initiative. (2018). *In the aftermath of genocide: Report on the status of Sinjar*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e4ed852d5526563e04b189a/t/5e56cb17a48d421ed1b98762/1582746423173/Status_of_Sinjar_Report.pdf
- The New Arab. (2023, November 7). Iraq announces return of 487 Yazidis to Sinjar, nine years on from genocide by Islamic State. <https://www.newarab.com/news/iraq-announces-return-487-yazidis-sinjar>
- Niemann, A., & Zaun, N. (2023). Introduction: EU external migration policy and EU migration governance. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49(12), 2965-2985.
- Nolte, G. (2010). Vom Weltfrieden zur menschlichen Sicherheit? Zu Anspruch, Leistung und Zukunft des Völkerrechts. In H. Münkler, M. Bohlender, & S. Meurer (Eds.), *Sicherheit und Risiko: Über den Umgang mit Gefahr im 21. Jahrhundert* (pp. 125–145). transcript Verlag. <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839412299>
- OECD. (2025). *International Migration Outlook 2025*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/ae26c893-en>
- Papanicolopulu, I. (2013). Hirsi Jamaa v. Italy (Application No. 27765/09). *American Journal of International Law*, 107(2), 417-423. <https://doi.org/10.5305/amerjintelaw.107.2.0417>
- Piecha, O. M. (2024, April). *The Yazidis: There is no going back to the time before the genocide* (I. Elgibali, Ed.). Pro Asyl; Wadi. https://www.proasyl.de/wp-content/uploads/2024_04_23_The-Yazidis_ENG.pdf
- Potot-Warren, J. (2020). Identifying genocide: The Yazidi massacre in the context of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide 1948. *SJPPAR*, 2(1), 30–49.
- Pro Asyl. (2023, October 9). *Federal government secretly pushes for deportations to Iraq* [Bundesregierung forciert heimlich Abschiebungen in den Irak]. <https://www.proasyl.de/news/bundesregierung-forciert-heimlich-abschiebungen-in-den-irak/>
- Radboud Repository. (2024). *20 years of the Family Reunification Directive: Central themes, problem issues and implementation in selected member states*. Centre for Migration Law, Radboud University. <https://repository.ubn.ru.nl/handle/2066/326162>
- Rudolf, B. (1998). Chahal v. United Kingdom. *American Journal of International Law*, 92(1), 70–74. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2998063>
- Schier, M., & Deutschländer, C. (2025, September 19). Interview with Söder: Clear text on Bavaria's savings plan – this is where the red pencil is set [Interview mit Söder: Klartext zu Bayerns Sparplan]. *Münchner Merkur*. <https://www.merkur.de/politik/kokoloeres-markus->

[soeder-im-interview-probleme-loesen-alles-andere-ist-93942949.html](https://www.jobbatical.com/blog/security-checks-munich-russians)

- Serdiukov, G. (2025, April 8; updated 2026, April 28). *Security checks for Russians in Munich: Process* (2026). Jobbatical. <https://www.jobbatical.com/blog/security-checks-munich-russians>
- Shklar, J. (1998). The liberalism of fear. In J. Shklar & S. Hoffmann (Eds.), *Political thought and political thinkers* (pp. 3–20). University of Chicago Press.
- Sohlberg, A., & Johansson, A. (2026, June 2). *Europe's new migration pact: Researchers' reflections on the reform*. Centre on Global Migration, University of Gothenburg. <https://www.gu.se/en/research/europes-new-migration-pact-researchers-reflections-on-the-reform>
- Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz [Nationality Act; StAG], BGBl. I S. 1133 (1913, as amended 2024) (Ger.). <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/stag/>
- Stritzel, H. (2014). Securitization theory and the Copenhagen School. In *Security in translation* (New Security Challenges Series). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sunderland, J. (2026, June 26). Dangerous EU momentum towards offshore deportation centers: Plans for 'return hubs' in Africa, Central Asia. *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/06/26/dangerous-eu-momentum-towards-offshore-deportation-centers>
- Tadjbakhsh, S., & Chenoy, A. M. (2007). *Human security: Concepts and implications*. Routledge.
- Tomuschat, C. (2008). *Human rights: Between idealism and realism* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Thurau, J. (2025, October 23). Merz says Europeans fear 'public spaces' due to migration. *DW*. <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-merz-immigration-cities-migration-criminality-afd/a-74464907>
- Thurau, J. (2026, January 23). Germany investigates Russian espionage case. *Deutsche Welle*. <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-investigates-russian-espionage-case/a-75631642>
- United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq [UNAMI]. (2020, October 9). *UNAMI welcomes agreement on Sinjar: A first and important step in the right direction*. ReliefWeb. <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/unami-welcomes-agreement-sinjar-first-and-important-step-right-direction>
- United Nations Development Programme [UNDP]. (1994). *Human development report 1994*. Oxford University Press.
- United Nations. (1945). *Charter of the United Nations*. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>
- United Nations. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Resolution 217 A (III)). United Nations General Assembly.

- United Nations. (1951). *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. United Nations Treaty Series, 189, 137.
- United Nations. (1966a). *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. United Nations Treaty Series, 999, 171.
- United Nations. (1966b). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. United Nations Treaty Series, 993, 3.
- United Nations. (1969). *Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties*.
<https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%201155/volume-1155-i-18232-english.pdf>
- United Nations. (2020, October 9). An agreement between Iraq's federal and the Kurdish regional governments paves the way for reconstruction in the north. *UN News*.
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/10/1075102>
- United Nations. (2024). *International migrant stock 2024: Key facts and figures* (UN DESA/POP/2024/DC/NO. 13). Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.
- Vulner Project. (2020). *Addressing vulnerabilities of protection seekers in German federalism* (Research Report No. 1, WP3). Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology.
- Wæver, O. (1995). Securitization and desecuritization. In R. D. Lipschutz (Ed.), *On security* (pp. 46-86). Columbia University Press.
- Walters, W. (2002). Deportation, expulsion, and the international police of aliens. *Citizenship Studies*, 6(3), 265-292.
- Wiener A. *Contestation and Constitution of Norms in Global International Relations*. Cambridge University Press; 2018.
- Williams, M. C. (2011). Securitization and the liberalism of fear. *Security Dialogue*, 42(4-5), 453-463.
- WiMi Project. (2019). *Legal terms and definitions: Overview of legal statuses and definitions of migrants in Germany*. Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity.
- Yazda & The Free Yezidi Foundation. (2015). *ISIL: Nationals of ICC states parties committing genocide and other crimes against the Yazidis*. PeaceWomen.
<https://www.peacewomen.org/resource/isil-nationals-icc-states-parties-committing-genocide-and-other-crimes-against-yazidis>
- Yazda. (2016a). *Mass graves of Yazidis killed by the Islamic State organization or local affiliates on or after August 3, 2014: A report from the Yazda documentation project*.
- Yazda. (2016b). *Yazidi statement on identity of Yazidi* [Status update]. Facebook.
<https://www.facebook.com/yazda.organization/posts/567137470162870/>
- Yazda. (2017). *An uncertain future for Yazidis: A report marking three years of an ongoing genocide*. https://354a2745-cd89-499d-8ac2-0340313e364f.filesusr.com/ugd/92f016_230c3d32aa44498db557326046ad5ca7.pdf

Appendices

Appendix A

(Case Study I: Russian Nationals in Munich)

A1: Qualitative Interview Question Guidelines

1. Semi-Structured Oral Interview - M.

Interviewee: M. (Russian national residing in Munich)

Interviewer: Chiara Luccioli (author)

Format: videocall interview via phone

03 May 2026

(РУ)

1. Не могли бы вы кратко рассказать о себе и о том, что привело вас в Германию и в Мюнхен?
2. Вы приехали в Германию до 2022 года? Если да, то изменилось ли что-нибудь в вашей жизни в Германии как гражданина Российской Федерации с начала войны в Украине?
3. Слышали ли вы о новых проверках безопасности при выдаче вида на жительство, которые с марта 2025 года будут проводиться в отношении людей из Российской Федерации, проживающих в Мюнхене? И, если вы не против поделиться, каким был ваш опыт прохождения этих процедур (если они касались вас)?
4. Считаете ли вы, что эти меры каким-либо образом повлияли на вашу жизнь в Германии?
5. Стали ли вы более осторожны в своих высказываниях о политике, России или войне в общественных местах или на работе?
6. Испытывали ли вы стресс или неуверенность в отношении своего будущего в Мюнхене в связи с этими событиями? Если да, то что помогло/помогает вам сохранять душевное равновесие?

(ENG)

1. Could you briefly tell me about yourself and what brought you to Germany, and to Munich?

2. Did you come to Germany before 2022? If yes, since the war in Ukraine began, have your experiences living in Germany as a person from the Russian Federation changed in any way?
3. Have you heard about the new security checks for residence permits, applying for people coming from the Russian Federation now living in Munich since March 2025? And if you feel comfortable sharing, what was your experience with these procedures like (if they concerned you)?
4. Do you think these measures have affected your life in Germany in any way?
5. Do you ever feel more careful about what you say about politics, Russia, or the war in public or at work?
6. Did you feel any sense of stress or uncertainty about your future in Munich, connected to these experiences? If so, what helped/helps you stay grounded?

A2: Quantitative Survey Questionnaire

(ENG) Experiences of the people from the Russian Federation living in Munich
(РУ) Опыт людей из Российской Федерации, проживающих Мюнхене

[The following introduction was presented to the participants at the start of the digital Google Forms survey]:

(ENG) Welcome! My name is Chiara Luccioli, I am an Italian student currently writing my research Master's thesis in Germany, at the University of Hamburg. This survey is part of my academic research project on the experiences of people from the Russian Federation living in Germany (specifically in Munich), with a focus on safety, access to rights, social inclusion, and everyday experiences since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. Your participation is completely voluntary, you can freely skip any question that you do not wish to answer and you can stop the survey at any time you prefer.

The survey is completely anonymous, so no personal data or information that could directly identify you will be collected. All responses will be used strictly for academic research purposes, and the survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes max of your time.

For more information about me or my work you can check out my social media pages and Substack or reach out to me via the following links below:

E-mail: [Redacted for privacy]

Telegram/Whatsapp: [Redacted for privacy]

Instagram: [Redacted for privacy]

Linkedin: [Redacted for privacy]

Substack: [Redacted for privacy]

(РУ) Добро пожаловать! Меня зовут Кьяра Луччоли, я итальянская студентка, в настоящее время пишу магистерскую дипломную работу в Германии, в Гамбургском университете. Эта анкета является частью моего академического исследовательского проекта об опыте людей из Российской Федерации, проживающей в Германии (в частности в Мюнхене), с особым вниманием к безопасности, доступу к правам, социальной интеграции и повседневному опыту после начала войны в Украине. Ваше участие полностью добровольное: вы можете свободно пропустить любой вопрос, на который не хотите отвечать, и прекратить участие в опросе в любой удобный момент для вас.

Анкета полностью анонимна, поэтому никакие персональные данные или информация, позволяющая установить вашу личность, не будут собираться. Все ответы будут использоваться исключительно в академических исследовательских целях, и заполнение анкеты займёт не более 5-10 минут вашего времени.

Чтобы узнать больше обо мне или моей работе, вы можете заглянуть на мои страницы в социальных сетях и на substack или связаться со мной по ссылкам, приведенным ниже:

E-mail: [Redacted for privacy]

Telegram/Whatsapp: [Redacted for privacy]

Instagram: [Redacted for privacy]

Linkedin: [Redacted for privacy]

Substack: [Redacted for privacy]

1.

(ENG) Do you generally feel safe living in Germany and in Munich specifically?

(РУ) Чувствуете ли вы себя в безопасности, проживая в Германии и, в частности, в Мюнхене?

2.

(ENG) If you came to Germany before 2022, have you felt that your experience living in Germany as a person coming from the Russian Federation has changed since the beginning of the war in Ukraine?

(РУ) Если вы приехали в Германию раньше 2022 года, с начала войны в Украине вы почувствовали, что ваш опыт жизни в Германии как человека, прибывшего из Российской Федерации, изменился?

3.

(ENG) Have you ever felt treated differently or unfairly in Germany because of your nationality?

(РУ) Чувствуете ли вы, что к вам относятся иначе или несправедливо из-за вашего гражданства?

4.

(ENG) Have the new security checks for residence permits, applying for people coming from the Russian Federation now living in Munich, affected your life in Germany in any way?

(РУ) Повлияли ли на вашу жизнь в Германии новые меры безопасности при оформлении вида на жительство, введенные для граждан Российской Федерации, проживающих в настоящее время в Мюнхене?

5.

(ENG) Have these experiences caused you any stress or concern, or uncertainty about your future in Munich?

(РУ) Вызывали ли у вас эти ситуации стресс, беспокойство или неуверенность относительно вашего будущего в Мюнхене?

6.

(ENG) Have political discussions, media narratives, or public attitudes towards the Russian Federation negatively affected your life in Munich?

(РУ) Повлияли ли политические дискуссии, освещение в СМИ или отношение общественности к Российской Федерации негативно на вашу жизнь в Мюнхене?

7.

(ENG) Do you ever feel more careful about expressing your opinions on politics, on Russia, or the war in public or at work?

(РУ) Стали ли вы более осторожны в выражении своего мнения о политике, о России или войне в общественных местах или на работе?

8.

(ENG) Do you feel that you have full access to basic rights in Germany (education, healthcare, work, and public services)?

(РУ) Чувствуете ли вы, что имеете полный доступ к основным правам в Германии (образование, здравоохранение, работа и государственные услуги)?

9.

(ENG) Do you feel that your rights, dignity, and security are respected by German institutions (educational institutions, public offices, authorities)?

(РУ) Чувствуете ли вы, что ваши права, достоинство и безопасность уважаются немецкими учреждениями (образовательными учреждениями, государственными органами, властями)?

End of questionnaire - Окончание анкеты

(ENG) Thank you for taking part in this research! Your participation is greatly appreciated and very valuable for this study!

(РУ) Спасибо за участие в этом исследовании! Ваш вклад очень ценен и важен для данной работы!

Appendix B

(Case Study II: Iraqi Yazidi Community In Germany)

B1: Qualitative Interview Question Guidelines

1. Semi-Structured Written Interview - Thikran Mato

Interviewee: Thikran Mato, director of the art exhibition and initiative *Nobody's Listening* and genocide survivor)

Interviewer: Chiara Luccioli (author)

Format: written document via phone

14 May 2026

1. Could you briefly introduce yourself and your role in the *Nobody's Listening* initiative?
2. What were the main aims behind the creation of this immersive exhibition and why was virtual reality chosen as a means of communication?
3. How does the exhibition seek to represent the Yazidi genocide and its aftermath and what are the main messages or reflections you hope visitors take away from the exhibition, also in the long-term?
4. How does the exhibition give space to survivors, Yazidi artists, and other affected communities to express their experiences?
5. Based on your experience, how do Yazidis living and relocating here in Germany deal with questions of memory and identity?
6. In your opinion, have the current public and political debates in Germany had any impact on the Yazidi community and on awareness of Yazidi issues?
7. Does *Nobody's Listening* engage or collaborate with Yazidi organizations, activists, or community groups in Germany?
8. In your opinion, what are the main needs or priorities for Yazidi communities and advocacy initiatives today, both in Germany and internationally?
9. Is there anything else you believe is important to understand regarding the role of art in relation to the Yazidi experience, as well as about the exhibition's impact on memory, justice, and awareness-raising for the Yazidi genocide?

2. Semi-Structured Oral Interview - Walad Kiret

Interviewee: Walad Kiret, board member of the *Yazidisches Jugend Deutschland*

Interviewer: Chiara Luccioli (author)

Format: videocall interview via phone

18 May 2026

1. Could you briefly introduce yourself, the work and mission of the Ezidische Jugend Deutschland?
2. What are the main activities and initiatives your organization carries out for the Yazidi community in Germany?
3. Based on your experience, what are the main challenges currently faced by young Yazidis and the Yazidi community in Germany?
4. In your opinion and based on your work, how do young Yazidis navigate questions of identity, history and cultural preservation while growing up in Germany?
5. In your experience, have members of the community experienced any forms of discrimination or insecurity in Germany?
6. In your view, do German politics and media debates affect in any way the Yazidi community and its youth, also in your organization's work?
7. Does your organization engage in networking and cooperation with other youth groups, NGOs, or German institutions for your work?
8. In your opinion, what are the main needs or priorities for Yazidi youth and community organizations today?
9. Is there anything else you believe is important to understand and to address regarding the experiences of Yazidis and of Yazidi youth and community-building in Germany?

3. Semi-Structured Oral Interview - Dr. Katerina Kratzmann

Interviewee: Dr. Katerina Kratzmann, cluster coordinator for governance, peacebuilding, and climate change at the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) (German Agency for International Cooperation) Iraq

Interviewer: Chiara Luccioli (author)

Format: Microsoft Teams videocall

22 June 2026

1. How would you describe GIZ's current overall role in Iraq, particularly in relation to development cooperation, stabilisation, governance, and social cohesion?
2. How are migration-related dynamics, such as return and reintegration, reflected in GIZ programming in Iraq, and how are these aspects typically addressed in practice?
3. How are different groups, such as vulnerable communities and minorities, taken into account in the design and implementation of GIZ programmes in Iraq?
4. How does GIZ consider and engage with the priorities and expectations of its various partners when operating in Iraq?
5. How are human rights principles integrated into the design and implementation of GIZ projects in Iraq?

B2: Quantitative Survey Questionnaire

(ENG) Yazidi Community Experiences in Germany

(DE) Erfahrungen der jesidischen Gemeinschaft in Deutschland

[The following introduction was presented to the participants at the start of the digital Google Forms survey]:

(ENG) Welcome! My name is Chiara Luccioli, I am an Italian student currently writing my research Master's thesis in Germany, at the University of Hamburg. This survey is part of my academic research project on the experiences of the Yazidi community in Germany, with a focus on safety, access to rights, and social inclusion. Your participation is completely voluntary, you can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer and you can stop the survey at any time.

The survey is completely anonymous, so no personal data or any information that could directly identify you will be collected.

All responses will be used only for academic research purposes, and the survey will take approximately only 3-5 minutes of your time.

For more information about me or my work you can check out my social media pages and substack or reach out to me via the following links below:

E-mail: [Redacted for privacy]

Telegram/Whatsapp: [Redacted for privacy]

Instagram: [Redacted for privacy]

Linkedin: [Redacted for privacy]

Substack: [Redacted for privacy]

(DE) Herzlich willkommen! Mein Name ist Chiara Luccioli, ich bin eine italienische Studentin und schreibe derzeit meine Masterarbeit in Deutschland an der Universität Hamburg. Diese Umfrage ist Teil meines wissenschaftlichen Forschungsprojekts zu den Erfahrungen der jesidischen Gemeinschaft in Deutschland, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf Sicherheit, Zugang zu Rechten und sozialer Inklusion liegt. Ihre Teilnahme ist vollkommen freiwillig; Sie können alle Fragen überspringen, die Sie nicht beantworten möchten, und die Umfrage jederzeit abbrechen. Die Umfrage ist vollkommen anonym, es werden also keine personenbezogenen Daten oder Informationen erfasst, die Sie direkt identifizieren könnten.

Alle Antworten werden ausschließlich für wissenschaftliche Forschungszwecke verwendet, und die Umfrage dauert nur etwa 3 bis 5 Minuten.

Weitere Informationen über mich oder meine Arbeit findest du auf meinen Social-Media-Seiten und auf Substack oder du kannst mich über die folgenden Links kontaktieren:

E-mail: [Redacted for privacy]

Telegram/Whatsapp: [Redacted for privacy]

Instagram: [Redacted for privacy]

Linkedin: [Redacted for privacy]

Substack: [Redacted for privacy]

1.

(ENG) Do you generally feel safe living in Germany?

(DE) Fühlen Sie sich in Deutschland generell sicher?

2.

(ENG) Have you ever felt discriminated against or treated unfairly in Germany because of your background or identity?

(DE) Haben Sie sich in Deutschland aufgrund Ihrer Herkunft oder Identität jemals diskriminiert oder ungerecht behandelt gefühlt?

3.

(ENG) Do you think political or media debates about migration in Germany negatively affect your life or the life of your community?

(DE) Glauben Sie, dass sich politische oder mediale Debatten über Migration in Deutschland negativ auf Ihr Leben oder das Leben Ihrer Gemeinschaft auswirken?

4.

(ENG) Have you ever felt worried about your legal status or about migration controls?

(DE) Haben Sie sich schon einmal Sorgen um Ihren Aufenthaltsstatus oder um Einwanderungskontrollen gemacht?

5.

(ENG) Do you feel you have full access to basic rights in Germany (education, healthcare, work, and public services)?

(DE) Haben Sie das Gefühl, in Deutschland uneingeschränkten Zugang zu den Grundrechten (Bildung, Gesundheitsversorgung, Arbeit und öffentliche Dienstleistungen) zu haben?

6.

(ENG) Do you feel respected by German institutions (schools, public offices, authorities)?

(DE) Fühlen Sie sich von deutschen Institutionen (Schulen, Behörden, Ämtern) respektiert?

End of questionnaire - Ende des Fragebogens

(ENG) Thank you for taking part in this research, your participation is greatly appreciated and very valuable for this study!

(DE) Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Studie – wir wissen Ihre Mitwirkung sehr zu schätzen und sie ist für diese Untersuchung von großem Wert!

