

713 right-wing, racist and anti-Semitic attacks since 2015 in Thuringia:

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Since the racist mobilisation in 2015 by movements like "Thügida" and AfD, the counselling service for victims of right-wing, racist and anti-Semitic violence in Thuringia, ezra, has counted 713 right-wing motivated attacks. In comparison to 2018 (166), the Victim Counselling Centre of Thuringia registered a decrease to 108 cases of right-wing, racist and anti-Semitic violence for the year 2019. Racism remains the most common motive, followed by attacks against political opponents. Most attacks were again counted in Erfurt, Jena and the county of Saalfeld-Rudolstadt. Altogether at least 155 people were affected by right-wing violence in Thuringia in 2019.

"Right-wing violence in Thuringia in 2019 also remained at the alarmingly high level of the recent years, far higher than in the years before 2015. The danger of right-wing terrorist attacks is extremely high. The decline from the previous year must be treated with caution," warns Franz Zobel, ezra project coordinator. The Victim Counselling Centre is expecting a high number of unreported cases. The increasing normalisation of right-wing and racist violence is considered to be one reason for this trend. Especially if there are no consequences for the perpetrators, this can lead to resignation among those affected and a loss of confidence in the investigating authorities and the judiciary, which means that attacks, for instance, are not reported at all. In addition, there is "a climate of fear, which is characterised by concrete experiences in everyday life, such as racist insults on the street or right-wing hatred on the Internet, which are not recorded in any statistics in Thuringia", adds the project coordinator.

It must be noted that "right-wing and racist violence have been escalating for years and no appropriate action has been taken. In response to the serious crisis for democracy and human rights, now there is an urgent need for a cross-party alliance that focuses on the perspectives and demands of those affected and finally implements concrete measures," demands Zobel. Many of the demands of those affected can be found in the recommendations for action made by the two Thuringian NSU investigative committees and the Enquete Commission on Racism and Discrimination, many of which have still not been implemented. The ezra project coordinator speaks of a "backlog of reforms, which numerous people experience every day in a cruel way."

Another problem can be seen in the lack of law enforcement by investigating authorities and the judiciary according to the Victim Counselling Centre. If, for example, six years after the brutal attack by militant neo-Nazis on a funfair company in February 2014 in Ballstädt, none of the convicted perpetrators are still in prison, "this is not only an enormous burden for those affected, but also sends a signal to organized racists and neo-Nazis, namely that they do not have to fear consequences for their actions," explains Zobel.

Finally, Zobel calls for more solidarity with those affected by racism, anti-Semitism, right-wing hate speech and violence. A "culture of solidarity is needed, which gives hope to those affected in these times, providing them with concrete support", the project

coordinator appeals to the responsibility of each individual. This has become apparent in various places in Thuringia, for example after the events in the Thuringian parliament on 5 February or the right-wing terrorist attack in Hanau.

Ezra's statistics only include cases in which a right-wing motive for the crime can be identified, based on fixed criteria defined as quality standards by the Association of Counselling Centres for Victims of Right-wing, Racist and Anti-Semitic Violence e.V. (VBRG - Verband der Beratungsstellen für Betroffene rechter, rassistischer und antisemitischer Gewalt e.V.) and which are based on the Federal Criminal Police Office's definition of "politically motivated crime - right-wing". Not all cases published in the ezra record are included in the statistics and vice versa.

ezra is funded by the Protestant Church in Central Germany (EKM - Evangelische Kirche in Mitteldeutschland). Since April 2011, the counselling centre has been supporting people who are attacked because perpetrators assign them to a group of people they reject. In 2019, 176 people were counselled by ezra. The Victim Counselling Centre is financed by the federal programme "Living Democracy!" and the Thuringian state programme for democracy, tolerance and open-mindedness "DenkBunt".