



8.3.25 Implementation of our commitments

International Women’s Day is a day to celebrate the achievements in the feminist struggles but also a day to acknowledge how much remains to be done. It reminds us that progress isn’t just about reflection but about taking decisive, bold steps to turn our commitments into action.

Women in Exile & Friends welcome you all to join our rally outside the camp in Eisenhüttenstadt on the 8th of March at 12:00. We will travel with the Soli bus at 10:00 from Oranienplatz, Berlin.

While the official United Nations theme for International Women’s Day is **“Count Her In: Invest in Women. Accelerate Progress”**, which focuses on addressing poverty, institutions and financing with a gender perspective, Women in Exile & Friends is embracing a different theme: **“No to racism, sexism and discrimination”**.

We want to denounce the hatred and discrimination that most politicians are currently directing against asylum seekers and migrants. We will say **“NO”** to the scapegoating of asylum seekers for all the problems in this country! It is your dirty racist politics that stinks!

Right-wing and far-right discourses in Europe threaten women’s rights and the progress of feminist movements, hence **the next German federal elections on 23rd February**, will determine the political winds.

The elections will show whether the majority has chosen humanity over the tyranny of the rich and powerful. We have already begun to experience the rise of institutional racism and racism on the streets as refugee women*. We still face systematic
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inequalities, rising violence and racial disparities that hold us back from reaching our full potential. Our aim is to enable refugees who identify themselves as women* to stand up for their rights as women* living in this society.

Some of us have been the victims of physical assault and abuse by strangers, while others have been the victims of abuse by neighbours. We cannot succeed if part of us are held back as refugee women*.

This must stop, and it can only stop if we are united in the demand that **'human dignity'** is upheld as a fundamental right. We must show solidarity with those who are most affected and who have neither the power nor the right to express their rights through voting. **We expect from non-refugee women* an open-minded solidarity in denouncing discrimination, racism, sexism and violence.** It is time to look at our fights as **"Same, same but different"**.

Our Music Therapy Project: A Welcome Path To Healing

Refugee women* are discriminated in the asylum process and excluded from integration by society. When they arrive here, they have endured unimaginable hardships: forced relocation, violence and a break with their culture of origin.

These traumatic experiences leave deep wounds - on a physical as well as an emotional level. In this context, music is a powerful therapeutic tool that overcomes language and cultural barriers and provides comfort, resilience and hope.

Music is a universal language

Music is able to convey emotions that words alone cannot express. For refugee women who do not speak the language of the host country, music offers a means of expressing their pain, hope and identity.

Music therapy workshops not only create a safe space in which they can share their experiences, but also enable them to reconnect with cultural traditions that are threatened by exile. We organize the workshops with experts who have their own experience of migration and flight and invite refugee women from various camps in Brandenburg and Berlin.

The offers enable the women to gain a sense of belonging and to strengthen themselves in dealing with trauma in a protected environment. The special therapists and the music from the countries of origin enable the participants to preserve their cultural heritage.



Therapeutic benefits of music

The music therapy promotes emotional and mental healing aimed especially at refugee women* who are confronted with trauma. Here are some of the most important benefits:

- Reduction of stress and anxiety: Music helps to calm the nervous system and induce a state of relaxation.
- Expression of emotions: By composing songs, singing or listening to suitable music, the participants can express suppressed emotions such as sadness or anger.
- Boosting self-esteem: Participating in musical activities, such as playing an instrument or singing in front of a group, can boost self-confidence.
- For refugee women living in isolation, singing or making music in a group promotes important social bonds.

Many organizations around the world have launched music therapy programs to support refugee women. We, women in exile, have placed a focus on dance. Our programs encourage women to dance their own songs, to find an expression that reflects their specific experiences. This promotes catharsis. This special way of healing or relieving trauma is very welcome, it also brings joy to the participants.

Support Our House Project

It has been a long term dream from our initiative to have a house project. This is in line with our long term campaign “No lager for women* and children, Abolish all lagers”.



We know this is a long shot in the unknown, especially because our organisation is based on a majority of women* who are still in their asylum process and threatened with everyday racism and deportation.

This includes also women who have very limited chances of getting access to the housing market. However, we believe with your solidarity and support, we can realise this dream.

It is from this solidarity that, we have been offered to buy a house in a small village in the State of Brandenburg. A small village where most probably the residents are against foreigners, but we have also met a few residents in the same area, who are happy to live in a diverse community. This is what we want to build on.

We have been able to interact with many housing projects all over the country, where we have experienced warm welcome and political solidarity.



Some of us have had the privilege of staying in Solizimmer or bedrooms offered to people in need, which have been both very helpful and a learning space.

From these experiences, it was possible to learn a lot on how left-wing movements, individuals and supporters operate and organise. This has been an eye-opening experience on what it means to be perceived as anti-racist and being anti-racist (an uncomfortable topic for another day).

We have been more than grateful for these opportunities. This is why we look forward to your solidarity and support to be able to build an autonomous solidarity and social housing project of our own. This does not mean though that we will no longer need the spaces you have provided for us. We need them now more than ever, because the political climate is blowing against us and without you, many of us will be blown away.

We also know that it is not a walk in the park to run these spaces. We have many unanswered questions, for example, where will Women in Exile find the thousands of Euros needed to buy the house. Or, do we have the capacity and energy to fix and clean up this house which looks to be in a such a messy state?

With your solidarity and support, we are ready to give it ago!! Our motto is to “keep on going” and this why we believe we can make this dream become a reality!

No To Racism, Sexism And Discrimination

I wondered how many of us heard Mariann Edgar Budde, the Episcopal Bishop of Washington, speak at Trump's inauguration service at the Washington National Cathedral? How many of us reading this newsletter listened? For me it was courage and humanity rolled into one.

What are we trying to do in our own courageous way to change the narrative? What are we doing to address the rhetoric of political parties, seeking parliamentary seats using refugees and migrants as tickets and scapegoats?

To the ones who can vote: let's use our democratic rights and our right to vote wisely. Let's vote for humanity, because that's the only way to make the rich and powerful see reason.

Let's act now, before it's too late, before things get worse. Things are already getting more violent.



One of us experienced a nearly fatal racist attack at the end of 2024. Read her testimony:

“I am a victim of many racist attacks. I have faced racism right, left and centre. I can't really say the reason because I actually believe there are no races and only humanity. This is my story from 27th December 2024 @ 6:22 pm.

I was ignored at the station in Müncheberg Markt. I was on my way to Strausberg. The inspector gave gifts to people, maybe because it was a festive season. Everyone got a gift, except me. Maybe it's because of my skin colour that I don't receive gifts? Did it hurt? Yes, it did. Did I react in any way? No. Why not? Because it was just the tip of the iceberg. 2 weeks earlier I had a near fatal attack.

So this is what happened, I was waiting for a subway train in Frankfurter Allee. A man came out of nowhere with a pair of scissors and a stick that had a pointed edge like a sharp dagger. He wanted to stab me in the neck with the scissors. I was lucky to have missed it.

I was so scared that I didn't react at all. Luckily the train came and I got on immediately and left the scene.

We all live in fear of such attacks, I was just lucky to miss being stabbed. But I wonder what will happen if I'm not so lucky next time, or if someone else is not so lucky?

I say no to racism, no to bullying, no to harassment, no to humiliation and no to any kind of indignity. We deserve better.”



KEEP IN TOUCH

Website: women-in-exile.net
Facebook: “Women in Exile & Friends”
Twitter: https://twitter.com/women_in_exile
Tel: 0331-24348233
Email: info@women-in-exile.net

DONATIONS

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IBAN: DE21430609671152135400
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