

Institutional Violence in Family Proceedings in Germany: Experiences of Mothers and Children Denied Protection

Introduction

My name is Christina Mundlos. I hold degrees in sociology and gender studies and have worked for many years in women's counseling centers and as an equality officer. Since 2021, my work has focused exclusively on mothers who have children with the perpetrator and who are denied protection from violence by state authorities.

The experiences described in this report were gathered through my work as a consultant and public activist for violence prevention in 2026. Every year, hundreds of mothers contact me seeking support after reporting domestic violence, post-separation violence, sexualized violence, and psychological or financial abuse. In addition, I gathered information through two nationwide online petitions in 2023 and 2025, supported by nearly 136,000 signatures and 40 civil society organizations, scientists, lawyers, and practitioners.

This submission documents patterns of what I refer to as "institutional violence" against mothers: Their request for protection from violence frequently leads to a reversal of victim and perpetrator. This results not only in a denial of protection, but also in an escalation of the perpetrator's violence, because institutions now support the perpetrator in every conceivable institutional way while the violence is being carried out. In effect, institutions silence the victims, they force victims into contact with the perpetrator, they separate mothers and children from each other, and place the children without restriction into the custody of the perpetrators.

The cases show repeated failures to implement key protections of the Istanbul Convention, particularly Articles 26, 31, 45 and 48.

Therefore, I try to influence politics. But none of my petitions from 2023 and 2025-2026 have had their demands implemented to this day. That's why I'm sending you my statement also as a kind of plea for help on behalf of all the mothers who beg me for help every day.

My goal with this report is to provide GREVIO with direct, practice-based evidence of these systemic gaps.

Reports from Mothers, Children & Professionals about the Disregard of the Istanbul Convention in Germany

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I. 105 Anonymous Reports from Mothers

Anonymous Report 1

In 2019, I left the family home with my children after a physical assault. My injuries were medically documented. Nevertheless, during the subsequent family court proceedings, the violence I had experienced and its impact on the children were not adequately taken into account.

I was repeatedly told to strictly separate issues between the parental relationship and the child. I was advised not to focus on my own experiences of violence, so as not to be perceived as conflict-oriented or "attachment intolerant." I worried that even mentioning the consequences of the violence would be interpreted as "speaking badly about the father." The Youth Welfare Office threatened that I could lose custody if I did not stop talking about the violence.

Over the years, the children repeatedly described their distress and experiences of violence to the Youth Welfare Office, guardians ad litem, teachers, and other professionals. In particular, it was repeatedly documented that a shared-residence arrangement was not recommended by the professionals involved. Nevertheless, the children were repeatedly required to explain their situation, only to be ignored once again.

When I referred to the Istanbul Convention in 2020, the judge responded:

"Turkish laws are of no interest in Germany."

I was forced into silence about the violence because I was repeatedly told that otherwise I would be considered "attachment intolerant" and therefore unsuitable to retain custody.

Parties involved: Fürth Youth Welfare Office, Fürth Family Court, Diakonie Fürth.

Anonymous Report 2

I am a mother and a survivor of domestic violence and post-separation abuse.

In my dealings with the General Social Services (ASD) and the Workers' Welfare Association (AWO), I experienced that my reports of violence did not lead to consistent protection. Instead, the father, whom I identified as violent, was actively supported during counseling in strengthening his position within the family court dispute.

External reports of endangerment were never processed.

In my view, those involved often lacked a broader perspective. Individual incidents and potential offenses were considered separately rather than being recognized as part of an ongoing pattern of control, intimidation, misrepresentation, and harm to the child.

As a result, the violence was not classified as a safety risk but treated as a mutual parental conflict. I was repeatedly required to justify my need for protection, while his behavior was not adequately assessed in terms of its overall impact.

This severely damaged my trust in support institutions.

Anonymous Report 3

In my case, the protective purpose of the Istanbul Convention was repeatedly undermined.

Following documented domestic violence, it was not the perpetrator who was consistently held accountable. Instead, I, as the mother, was pressured and accused of failing to protect my child adequately.

On June 3, 2025, the Youth Welfare Office appeared following a report and attempted to take my then two-year-old daughter into care without first hearing my side of the situation.

My concerns about safety, the history of violence, threats, controlling behavior, and my request for neutral, trauma-informed supervised visitation were not adequately considered.

Instead of protection, I experienced pressure, unclear responsibilities, months of inaccessibility, contradictory information, and the expectation that I should find direct solutions with the father despite my fears of escalation.

Violence was treated as an ordinary parental conflict, with consequences for both me and my child.

Anonymous Report 4

I experienced:

- The father being removed from the home by police after he locked us inside and prevented us from leaving
- Stalking since autumn 2023
- Digital stalking
- 24/7 camera and mobile phone surveillance by the father
- Physical and psychological violence against the children and me (including a criminal police investigation in 2023)
- Denial of protection measures; the Istanbul Convention was not applied (Bavaria, City of Erlangen)

Anonymous Report 5

I experienced psychological violence during my marriage and continue to experience post-separation abuse, financial abuse, and institutional violence.

My daughter was eleven years old when, on March 1, 2023, she was removed from her previous life against her explicit wishes and placed with her father. I had been a single parent for ten years.

To this day, my daughter (now 14) repeatedly says that she wants her home and her former life back. For approximately one and a half years, there was no contact between us. Contact was prohibited.

Only within the last few months have four supervised visits taken place, each lasting one hour.

Beyond that, I am not permitted to have direct contact with my daughter.

I experience victim-blaming and do not feel protected by the Youth Welfare Office, the guardian ad litem, or the courts.

After years of proceedings, I am financially and emotionally exhausted. I can no longer afford legal representation.

I have not experienced the protection promised by the Istanbul Convention.

Anonymous Report 6

The older child (then 12 years old) contacted me during a visit with the father and begged me to help, saying that things were terrible with him, especially for the younger sibling (aged 9).

Both children had independently reported over a long period that the father would lock them in rooms, force them to the floor, scream at them, hold them down, threaten them with the police, and drive them to what he claimed was a children's home.

When I later filed a report concerning years of violence against me during and after the relationship, and later against the children, especially the younger child, the Youth Welfare Office employee reacted with shock and incomprehension.

She accused me of endangering the welfare of the children because, in her view, I wanted to take the children away from their father. She then recommended that the court-appointed expert place the children with the father.

When the police interviewed the children in relation to my complaint, they first asked both children whether they wanted their father to go to prison.

Both children said no and subsequently refused to continue giving statements.

For the police, that effectively ended the matter.

Anonymous Report 7

My child and I experienced the following twice at the Maxburg, Munich Family Court:

Institutional violence through disregard of the Istanbul Convention:

- No proper assessment of evidence
- No comprehensive right to be heard before the judge
- No recognition of expert input (women's support services) and their statements
- No acknowledgment of experienced violence
- Uncritical pro-father bias (also by the Youth Welfare Office and guardian ad litem)

- Trivialization and disregard of all incidents of abuse (psychological and physical)
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Coercion into cooperation with the perpetrator (court-ordered counseling / mediation)
- Disregard for the best interests of the child
- Promotion of ongoing endangerment of the child's welfare
- Institutional violence also as financial violence (legal costs / counseling costs)

As a victim of domestic violence (both psychological and physical), I am not recognized as such by the court because the perpetrator can always provide explanations for his actions.

I can refute all of his false statements and allegations with facts.

However, no conclusions are drawn from this that would support my child's or my own account or lend credibility to our statements.

The statements from women's support services were dismissed as insignificant "background noise."

Years of violence were rendered invisible and treated as not credible.

Anonymous Report 8

Since 2023, my ex-partner has shown physical and verbal aggression toward me and my daughter. This escalated to him threatening to move back into the shared home and involving the child in these conflicts.

Ultimately, the police were called to the house because he refused to leave after a visitation. He said: "Give me the house key, sign my demand, then I'll leave for now."

Although I had already contacted the police and submitted his threatening letters, and although I was told that a domestic violence officer would contact me, the officers on site—after an hour of discussion—decided based on his claim that he had a court order (which he did not) that he could move back into the home while I was away with my daughter.

I had to hand over the house key in front of my seven-year-old daughter. I was told:

"You can deal with finding something new during your 14-day holiday."

My daughter repeatedly stated in front of the officers that she did not want her father to move back in.

We went on holiday not knowing whether we would still have a home upon return.

Ultimately, I was forced to leave the house with my daughter within four weeks due to the ongoing escalation of the situation.

To this day, neither the domestic violence officer nor any other institution has shown interest. It was treated as a "family dispute."

A complaint to the police resulted only in vague responses. My reference to the Istanbul Convention was ignored.

Anonymous Report 9

My separation from the child's father followed severe emotional, physical, sexualized, and economic violence.

During the separation phase, there was severe stalking. This escalated to him installing a surveillance camera in my new apartment directed at my bed, secretly filming me naked for days.

A restraining order was issued, but was overridden for contact with the children. Three years later, he was criminally convicted.

None of this was taken into account in the family court proceedings.

I was told to "look forward." I was forced into agreeing to a shared custody arrangement because his actions were said not to indicate he was a "bad father."

When the children were nine and ten, they repeatedly and clearly reported emotional and physical violence against them.

As a result, they were placed with the perpetrator.

This was justified by my alleged "level of emotional injury" and "attachment intolerance," which were deemed more problematic than the violence itself.

There have been countless proceedings, and no one sees what is happening.

My younger son once said at age nine:

“I can see in my father’s eyes that he enjoys tormenting us.”

The institutions that were supposed to protect us instead left us exposed to violence for nearly a decade.

Anonymous Report 10

As a survivor of domestic violence, I experience severe deficiencies in protection in Germany. The violence in my relationship consisted mainly of psychological violence, control, isolation, intimidation, and ongoing conflict.

After separation, I was repeatedly confronted with complaints and legal proceedings; in total, there were six criminal complaints and numerous proceedings and fine applications against me.

My protection order application was rejected, partly on the grounds that it would restrict the father’s life, even though I only requested that he no longer approach me.

In the family court proceedings, witness statements were not taken, and allegations were not investigated.

The children were asked suggestive questions.

A court-appointed expert without sufficient qualifications made far-reaching assessments of parenting ability and diagnosed alleged “attachment intolerance” on my part.

Written communication was not evaluated, yet conclusions were drawn about parental communication and cooperation abilities.

From the outset, the father’s communication consisted of demeaning the mother, making accusations (including defamation), shifting blame, and repeatedly threatening legal action if his demands were not met.

Despite ongoing conflict and lack of cooperation, a shared custody arrangement was imposed.

Reports by the Youth Welfare Office and expert opinions contained interpretations and assessments without supporting evidence.

Anonymous Report 11

S., 37, Baden-Württemberg

In my case, I see a significant disregard for the principles of the Istanbul Convention.

Despite repeated indications of controlling behavior, refusal of communication, psychological pressure, loyalty conflicts in the child, and structural disadvantages after separation, these aspects were not sufficiently considered by the responsible institutions.

Instead of assessing the impact of this behavior on mother and child, responsibility for resolving the conflict was repeatedly shifted onto me.

It is particularly concerning that the expectation to adapt and cooperate was placed primarily on me, while a lack of cooperation on the other side had few consequences.

Indications of health neglect, repeated conflicts in healthcare decisions, distressing incidents in kindergarten, and repeated statements by my child were, in my view, not considered with the necessary protective perspective.

Despite a long-running child protection process and numerous documented concerns, the child’s safety interests were not sufficiently taken into account.

The Istanbul Convention requires consideration of power imbalances, coercive control, and impacts on children. In my proceedings, however, continued contact with the perpetrator was repeatedly required, even though the patterns had long been known.

I see this as a structural failure to protect mothers and children in post-separation violence and control contexts.

Anonymous Report 12

The provisions of the Istanbul Convention are not sufficiently applied in Neunkirchen/Saar.

Despite a recorded telephone conversation allegedly documenting violent behavior during contact, this has not been considered in court proceedings.

Instead, I, as the mother, am again facing proceedings alleging child endangerment initiated by the court itself.

Although the Youth Welfare Office and family support services see no indication of danger, I am being required to undergo expert assessments and extensive evaluations.

At the same time, the father's mere denial of allegations appears sufficient.

Reports of violence are not taken seriously, and responsibility is placed unilaterally on me as the affected mother.

Anonymous Report 13

My relationship with the children's father began in 2016; we moved in together in 2018. During the relationship, there was psychological and physical violence against me, and from 2020 also against the children.

I experienced violence from the father of my children, including strangulation in the presence of the children. A criminal complaint was filed, but the case was closed.

We separated in June 2024.

In May 2025, the Higher Regional Court of Stuttgart did not take the reported violence into account; joint custody remained in place, and visitation rights were even expanded.

In July 2025, both children developed bruises after returning from contact visits. These were medically documented. The pediatrician called for child protection medical assessment; a university clinic recommended forensic evaluation.

In September 2025, the family court initiated a child protection procedure (§ 8a) based on the submitted facts, which is still not concluded.

In November 2025, instead of ordering medical clarification of the injuries, the family court ordered a psychological expert assessment.

For about a year, the twins have shown bedwetting, soiling, sleep disorders, emotional dysregulation, and aggression.

There are ongoing conflicts initiated by the ex-partner regarding health care, support measures, and visitation arrangements, as well as obstruction of necessary decisions.

Information about stays abroad with the children is provided only sporadically.

A medically indicated mother-child rehabilitation program was prevented due to lack of consent by the father and repeated contact with the clinic.

I cannot protect my children from further harm. In my view, the Istanbul Convention is not being adequately implemented.

Anonymous Report 14

The first protection order application was filed in 2024 (stalking, insults, physical assaults, threats). A settlement was reached for six months, justified by the fact that a child was involved and the separation was recent.

Further threats, insults, and physical boundary violations followed. The Youth Welfare Office was aware.

Contact continued despite the child refusing to see the father for five months.

At the end of 2025, during a child handover in the presence of the child, the father punched me in the face. This resulted in a double nasal bone fracture and broken teeth fragments. The child was traumatized.

A new protection order procedure was initiated, but the father did not comply with the contact and restraining order.

Visitation was suspended, but the child is five years old and shows trauma-related symptoms, with an ongoing risk to the child's welfare.

Anonymous Report 15

Special Education Teacher, Hesse

During visitation proceedings, I mentioned the violence committed against my son and me by the child's father. The judge then initiated custody proceedings against me.

In the Youth Welfare Office records, the following statement appears:

"The father admitted that he was once so provoked by the mother that he hit her."

There is also a statement from the daycare that our son reported being hit.

A photograph submitted to the court expert, showing my face injured and bleeding, was included in the appendix without comment and heavily reduced in size.

The father's lawyer stated in the courthouse corridor that the blows were "not that serious."

The children were never questioned about the violence by any authority.

In the proceedings, expanded visitation rights were granted to the father, even though both children told the Youth Welfare Office that violence continued regularly during visitation weekends.

The court-appointed parenting assistant only visits my household and does not support the violent and overwhelmed father.

Anonymous Report 16

I am experiencing:

1. State failure in protection against violence

During a drive on the motorway, the child's father threatened me and the children with extended suicide by letting go of the steering wheel, which caused severe trauma to the minor child. In addition, there were massive physical assaults against me in the car and at home (bruises). A formally submitted application for protection against violence was not considered in the family court proceedings of the Federal Republic of Germany, in violation of state duties of protection.

2. Ongoing endangerment in contact/visitation

Despite acute danger to life and proven traumatization, the judiciary grants the father unsupervised contact. This has led to continued physical and psychological violence as well as chronic neglect of the child.

3. Violation of the Convention

German judicial and youth welfare authorities failed to protect me from foreseeable violence. This constitutes a clear violation of the positive obligations under Articles 2, 3, and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Anonymous Report 17

I wrote to the Barnim Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt Barnim) on 28 May 2025 asking how and in what form the Istanbul Convention is implemented. I also asked about training, guidelines, and procedural standards regarding the Istanbul Convention. To date, I have received no response.

Anonymous Report 18

My former partner already abused me psychologically during pregnancy and continued to do so for years thereafter. Our daughter is also affected by his behaviour. After three years, I drew a line and contacted various counselling and support services, as I was aware that separation under these circumstances would not be easy. The domestic violence hotline told me: "What are we supposed to do about that?" and offered no support. At the Child Protection Association, I was told: "Your daughter also laughs sometimes, so she must be fine." I did not receive any meaningful counselling. After I announced the separation, we still had to live together in the same household for another six months. According to the guardian ad litem, I was not allowed to move out, as our then three-year-old daughter would have remained with him. Previously, he had hardly taken care of her. Due to the postponement of the court hearing, this situation was prolonged by another six months. This time was hell for us. Violence in all forms continued, yet I was still unable to leave the shared home.

Four years later, we are now in a shared custody (alternating residence) arrangement. Our experiences of violence by the father are of no interest to anyone. After a visitation weekend with

him, my daughter, for example, developed pneumonia, even though three adults were present. Instead of critically examining the circumstances, I was reprimanded by the paediatrician that such a thing should not have happened. However, the expert witness did not consider it serious, as the father (who, of course, did not inform me) supposedly did not want to disturb anything. The fact that I also had no contact with my daughter during his visitation is of no concern to anyone.

At the same time, expert witnesses attest to the father having a loving and caring relationship with our daughter, while I am attributed with perceptual or interpretative disorders. This discrepancy between my experiences and the assessments of various professionals is extremely distressing to me.

As long as one has not been beaten black and blue, one has no chance, and if one speaks up, one is labelled the hysterical mother who wants to take the child away from the father. The fact that one cannot protect one's child makes one incredibly angry and powerless.

Anonymous Report 19

I filed a criminal complaint in May 2024 due to death threats, psychological violence, financial abuse, defamation, and physical assaults against the joint children. All proceedings were partially discontinued under §154 after I mentioned illegal weapons possession, which had significantly escalated the threat situation. There was indeed a conviction for illegal weapons possession, but the circumstances have never been considered in family court proceedings (including the conviction itself). Consequently, no protection against violence was granted. The children were coached into making false statements at the Higher Regional Court (that violence by the father was allegedly invented by the mother), and they now live with the perpetrator without contact with their mother. The mother was denied contact without proper review. The Higher Regional Court pressured me into withdrawing my appeal by warning that otherwise the denial of contact would be extended to two years.

District Court and Youth Welfare Office Sonthofen, Higher Regional Court Augsburg, Public Prosecutor's Office Kempten.

Anonymous Report 20

My name is C., 50 years old, district of Böblingen:

My children were removed from me in disregard of the Istanbul Convention, the guidelines on ME/CFS in children, and defamation through incorrect official statements, also in court proceedings. I am now being threatened that the already known address of the children will be disclosed to the perpetrators. In addition, I received a six-month denial of contact based on a questionable expert report.

The father had already been recorded by the police for bodily harm against the child prior to custody proceedings. Suspicion diagnoses of ME/CFS also already existed for both children. Existing medical certificates (including home schooling documentation) were not taken into account. Since the trauma, the children have been "activated" without consideration of their post-exertional malaise. The father is believed, while everything I say is interpreted negatively—even issues related to the non-functioning daily care in the father's household.

Anonymous Report 21

In my proceedings, I am concerned that the Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt Munich, Berg am Laim) and the guardian ad litem are not taking domestic violence seriously.

During a home visit, the guardian ad litem repeatedly asked my child leading and suggestive questions. I had the impression that my child was being steered toward a "yes" answer.

I also experienced pressure at the Youth Welfare Office. A 50/50 custody arrangement was advocated. When I did not agree, a staff member essentially said: "I am asking you for the last time: yes or no?" My references to domestic violence, psychological stress, devaluation, and humiliation in front of the children were hardly taken into account. The attitude was more like: "We are looking

forward.” I was particularly shocked when I pointed out that the children cried during longer or even short separations from me and was told, in essence: “They cry briefly and then stop.”

Anonymous Report 22

My protection-from-violence proceeding was directed against the father, a former police director. After my application for protection was rejected in the first instance, I appealed to the Higher Regional Court. In that appeal, it was explained in detail that psychological violence, intimidation, and health consequences had not been sufficiently considered. I submitted evidence such as witness statements describing aggressive and intimidating behaviour and situations of fear and threat involving the father.

Two days before the hearing, my lawyer received information after a telephone call between the presiding judge and her that the appeal had no prospect of success. At the same time, reference was made to possible cost risks, although my legal expenses insurance had granted coverage. There was no substantive review of the appeal. After later inspection of the case file, I discovered that the witness statements submitted shortly before were not part of the court file. My later motion for bias and my request for reopening were also missing from the file.

In addition, I had considerable difficulties finding or maintaining legal representation. A lawyer from Munich explicitly told me that she was afraid to represent me in this case. To this day, it remains unclear to me whether the allegations of psychological violence, the witness statements, and the deficiencies raised in the appeal were ever fully examined.

Anonymous Report 23

I was in a 20-year relationship with three children. Even during the relationship, there was psychological and severe physical violence, also in the presence of the children. Three years after separation, we are still experiencing “post-separation violence”: stalking through repeated trackers, psychological pressure through threats, and manipulation of our environment. Financial abuse through refusal to provide information for maintenance calculations and withheld funds is driving us into ruin. Despite filing complaints, my application for protection against violence was rejected on the grounds that he also has custody rights and that the physical violence occurred some time ago. Because we do not have money for legal advice, we submitted this application alone. This step was extremely difficult for me. The disappointment about the rejection is great. We feel abandoned, and the resulting costs further complicate our daily life. We are afraid and do not know what to do anymore. The perpetrator, however, distorts the truth and deliberately deceives institutions and continues his violence undetected. He is a doctor and can afford any lawyer. We are fighting for survival. The rejection leaves us unprotected.

Anonymous Report 24

I am the mother of two children aged three months and ten years. Due to violence, threats, and significant stress related to the father of my younger daughter, I sought protection with my children in my holiday home on the French island of Corsica. Nevertheless, my children were taken from me there on 27 February 2026 as part of an official measure.

Since then, I have been fighting in Germany for their return. It is particularly distressing that my experiences of violence and need for protection have not been sufficiently considered.

I also have the impression that the protective mechanisms of the Istanbul Convention were not applied in my case. My ten-year-old child was removed from their familiar environment, school, and primary caregiver. My infant was separated from its mother at only three months of age. A court-ordered psychiatric report found no mental illness in me. Nevertheless, my children continue to live separated from me.

Anonymous Report 25

On December 5, 2023, after experiencing severe domestic violence, I filed a protection-from-violence request against the children's father. The protection order was served on December 8, 2023. On the same day, the children's father took three of our children. He kept the children with him despite the protection order. The youth welfare office supported this action. The children then did not attend school for several weeks.

As a result, my children were taken away from me, the protection order was lifted, I lost my apartment, and I was not allowed to see my children for four months. Only after filing a custody visitation lawsuit did I get supervised visits. To this day, concerns I raised about the children's well-being and the reports from the expert are not being considered. Instead, it is still being claimed that I took the children against the father's will and left the house. What is left out is that the children were seeking protection from violence and that I was forcibly thrown out of the apartment despite court rulings. The siblings were separated, one child stayed with the father.

Anonymous Report 26

I am the mother of a daughter and have been involved for years in a family court case where domestic, psychological & physical violence is not adequately taken into account. Even during pregnancy, there was control, intimidation, humiliation, isolation, threats of self-harm, physical assaults, and massive psychological pressure. In court, this is called a "parenting conflict." I was raped, humiliated, cheated on, stalked, and controlled. My daughter has been showing clear rejection, fear, and overwhelm in connection with her father for a long time. She also experienced violence, actively but mainly passively. Yet her "no" is not consistently treated as a signal for protection. Instead, accusations like loyalty conflict quickly come up. The violence against mother and child is not primarily examined, visitation seems more important than safety, the child is not adequately protected from repeated stress, and the consequences of experienced violence and neglect are being downplayed!

An ongoing proceeding must not lead to delaying protection. "A child needs their father" – we keep hearing. When there's a history of violence, fear, and clear rejection, protection from violence must be the real standard—not just a word in the law. We are scared, we are alone, and no one helps us. For years, decades, and even at this very moment. Please help us.

Anonymous Report 27

In the summer of 2024, I received protection from violence for myself and my children against their father after he choked our 5-year-old daughter. There was a police report and medical documentation. Despite this documentation, I lost custody in the family court proceedings in the summer of 2025. In the proceedings, issues of violence and protection from violence were not taken into account. Instead, the focus was on accusations of 'alienation,' 'attachment intolerance,' 'parentification,' and an alleged 'symbiosis' between me and the children. These terms were also used in an expert report of over 200 pages. Although I pointed out the Istanbul Convention both in writing and verbally, in my view, the documented violence was not sufficiently considered in the decision. For eight months, there has been no contact between me and my children. Before that, I had cared for and provided for them mostly on my own for eleven years. For me, this case shows how experiences of violence by mothers and children in family law take a back seat to allegations of alienation.

Anonymous Report 28

My child (5 years old) and I have experienced institutional violence, the downplaying of domestic and psychological abuse, and post-separation violence. The father has made several attempts to kill us, has been abusing the child since they were a baby, continues to exert massive violence, and the youth welfare office threatens me with losing custody if I report further abuse. Post-separation violence is facilitated by the perpetrator being forcibly given access to his victims. Visits are enforced against the child's welfare and against the Istanbul Convention, ignoring the child's wishes, and I am threatened with losing custody if I try to protect my child from the perpetrator. I am pressured into

counseling sessions with the perpetrator, where further psychological and institutional violence is carried out, the perpetrator is given more power and ability to destroy, and I am silenced.

Anonymous Report 29

In June 2023, we moved. I experienced physical and occasionally psychological violence. In August, I was diagnosed with cancer. In December, the situation escalated, and my daughter also acted aggressively against me. In January, the father kept calling the police, claiming that I was provoking him. I got in touch with Bela, an intervention center for domestic violence, which advised me to enter the women's shelter. My psycho-oncologist suspected that my daughter was being parentified by her father and advised me to inform the youth welfare office immediately. While cleaning, I found my daughter's panties in the trash. When I asked her about it, she said they were broken. But they weren't broken; they were stained. I later tested them and took the positive sperm test to the police. The youth welfare office told me over the phone to press charges. I did that. Since then, I have never seen my daughter again; she stayed with her father. The head of the youth welfare office said to me: "How dare you accuse your husband of something like that, and if you have experienced violence, that has nothing to do with your daughter."

I lived in a women's shelter for 6 months. In August 2024, my daughter gave a statement to the criminal police. The case was closed, my lawyer filed a complaint, which was rejected. The evidence was no longer available either, as it had been sent to the father during the appeal period. In August 2024, I found a file with my daughter on my Google account from December 2023: a video recording from the window overlooking the driveway, where she can be seen, set to a moaning sound of the father. My complaint to the Stralsund public prosecutor's office regarding the evidence was dismissed by the senior public prosecutor with the reasoning that sending the evidence to the father, including the sperm-positive test, was permitted because the traces from the test came from my daughter's underwear and she lives with her father. There are several criminal proceedings against me that have since been discontinued, and there was a restraining and no-contact order against me, but it was found that my basic rights were violated and that the proceedings were unlawful. The youth welfare office sees no risk to the child's well-being. I have PTSD and am no longer able to work.

Anonymous Report 30

1. As a single mother (since pregnancy), after numerous acts of coercion by the child's father, I was not informed or separately advised about my rights by the Youth Welfare Office during the prenatal (coerced) transfer of parental custody for the unborn child.
2. During childbirth, there were many violations against my explicitly stated will by the father, supported by „paternal rights“, including through a male midwife at the Hospital Frankfurt. This doesn't even include my previously submitted written rights regarding my own image.
3. Since then, there have been more than 30 court proceedings, expert reports, and criminal complaints, which have cost me at least €50,000 as a still single mother, in addition to the time and emotional strain. This constitutes institutional and financial violence.
4. Furthermore, the father of my daughter unlawfully kept her for one week during kindergarten age, in violation of a court order from the Higher Regional Court of Hamm. Despite my report to the police for child abduction and the fact that my nearly four-year-old daughter had never lived with him, the Youth Welfare Office told me that "the little one is just staying with her father now." The court later ordered her return with significant delay. Paternal visitation rights were not restricted afterwards, and no guardian ad litem or similar protection measures were put in place.
5. In addition, as a working single mother in a system-relevant public service position, I was denied kindergarten childcare for my child during the COVID-19 crisis by the Youth Welfare Office because the father requested it.
6. My daughter (now of primary school age) has been and continues to be questioned, observed, filmed, and assessed by more than 30 individuals (judges, guardians ad litem, Youth Welfare Office staff, educational guardians, expert witnesses, psychologists, contact

supervisors, etc.). This has been ongoing despite her clearly stating what happened and refusing contact with her father.

Anonymous Report 31

In my case, central requirements of the Istanbul Convention were not implemented. Despite physical violence against me (including strangulation and hair-pulling) as well as statements by the child about physical assaults (“grabbed”), no recognisable risk assessment was carried out. Contact with the father was continued regardless, and pressure was exerted through threats to expand it, without any comprehensible examination of potential risks.

Violence against the mother was not considered a relevant factor for child welfare, nor were the psychological effects on the children. Children’s statements were not systematically evaluated; instead, the children were informed about the father’s rights. At the same time, despite objective indications that I was not refusing contact, I was placed in a defensive position.

Repeated court proceedings in various legal areas led to significant pressure and function as a form of continued control (“violence through proceedings”), without this being taken into account. My case shows structural deficiencies in risk assessment, child protection, and institutional handling of contexts of violence.

Anonymous Report 32

After a friend, more than four years ago, lost her 6-year-old child following an expert report in Dortmund and the child was handed over to her violent ex-partner (and rapist), and after I witnessed her long struggle through the Dortmund court system with various expert reports and counter-expert reports, and saw how she became increasingly ill, I am now in the same position and feel completely powerless:

In 2021, I also fled domestic violence with my then 1.5-year-old child. The father is a proven alcoholic (confirmed by three clear TÜV hair analysis results) who regularly kicked in doors, committed severe psychological and physical violence in the presence of the child, and even deliberately deprived both me and the child of sleep and destroyed property. There were repeated death threats, suicide threats, and threats to harm the child. At 14 months, the child was left alone in the apartment by the father. Because there is little evidence (I was afraid to report him at the time), and because the father currently presents himself as cooperative, I am being psychologically assessed by the family court in Dortmund.

My trauma therapy (started in 2025 after a two-year waiting period) must currently be paused for this reason. I also became ill as a result of the relationship (fibromyalgia, PTSD) and am caring for our child alone in Germany without family support (place-bound due to custody and annual court proceedings initiated by the father since 2023). In addition, there is a highly retraumatising family assessment by the same expert who previously removed a child from my friend and is known in Dortmund for such cases.

I am being required to prove my psychological, emotional, and physical stability and willingness to allow unsupervised contact with the father, even though he denies the violence, ignores recommendations from the first judge to address his alcohol consumption, and frequently contradicts himself. The Youth Welfare Office and guardian ad litem are also unresponsive. The “best” lawyer in Dortmund is overwhelmed and has little understanding of the Istanbul Convention, despite advertising expertise in it.

Anonymous Report 33

District Court Westerburg / Westerwald: Violence was ignored in every hearing despite evidence, police reports, and photos. No one wanted to hear about the violence. My son has been forced into visitation since the age of two. My son is never believed. I was forced for years into parental meetings (at the Youth Welfare Office). I was very afraid of him, experienced heart palpitations during meetings, and was never taken seriously. I was sent alone with the perpetrator to the parking lot.

My older son was also psychologically and physically harmed by him at the time—this was also never considered: it was said that he is not his child and therefore unrelated to the visitation issue. The police forced me to bring the child to him, otherwise I would face serious trouble with the court.

Anonymous Report 34

I was abused and mistreated by my former partner. I do not need to say more about that. However, because of our shared child, I was never able to fully break off contact. On the contrary: the responsibility to continue communicating with him was placed on me.

From the guardian ad litem I heard: "It was really unfortunate that you applied for a restraining order." From the judge: "You are an adult, you have to sort this out yourself."

So I sort everything out. I organise our child's daily life, take care of school, holidays, appointments, and needs. I carry the financial, organisational, and emotional responsibility. My own boundaries and needs are often set aside—for my child.

I have received no support from authorities. If the father does not cooperate, this is often simply accepted. The consequences of violence seem to fade into the background.

Women affected by violence are expected to separate the experienced violence from shared parenting. Even if the child has witnessed the violence. The mother is expected to continue to meet her perpetrator, communicate with him, and always act in the best interests of the child. The enormous burden this creates is often overlooked. Responsibility is placed on the victim—not the perpetrator.

Sometimes only a few hours lie between a court hearing and the handover of my son to his father. I sought help, asked for support, and raised questions. I never received answers.

Anonymous Report 35

I am the mother of four children and have experienced that violence against women and children is not sufficiently taken into account in family court proceedings. During my marriage, I was subjected to psychological, physical, and financial violence. Among other things, I was strangled while holding my baby daughter Enna in my arms and my older daughter Mila stood next to us. After the separation, I discovered that I was being observed and filmed with night-vision equipment. My daughter Mila repeatedly reported fear and distressing experiences to schools, medical professionals, and in legal proceedings. Nevertheless, the children's statements and burdens were not sufficiently considered. Despite the history, a shared custody arrangement (alternating residence model) was introduced.

Support services for the children were also made more difficult. I wish that the Istanbul Convention would be consistently implemented and that violence, control, and the impact on children would be given greater weight in custody and visitation decisions.

Anonymous Report 36

I report my case to show the failure of protection against violence (Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention). After years of violence, rape, and confiscation of my passport, I applied for protection against violence.

My lawyer (from Münster) never believed me. Instead of protecting me (with sole registration), she sided with the unregistered, illegally employed perpetrator (working in his mother's café) and forced me to grant him access. In court she remained silent about my severe psychological condition following trauma, his criminality, drugs, offences, and maintenance debts.

My protection order was lifted, and I was pushed into a shared custody arrangement. The Youth Welfare Office in Münster acted improperly: I was instructed not to pick up the children from daycare. This enabled the perpetrator to effectively take the children, which he later falsely presented in court as my lack of interest. As a Romanian woman, I experienced deep institutional discrimination.

Anonymous Report 37

Even during pregnancy, the father committed domestic and financial violence, isolated me, and significantly disrupted the breastfeeding relationship with the child. Three months after birth, I moved out. Shortly after the child's third birthday, the father took the child alone on a three-week holiday to Italy. I was pressured by the Youth Welfare Office to agree.

The child returned completely distressed and made indications of sexual abuse. The local counselling centre for parenting referred the case to the Youth Welfare Office. As a result, the father received one year of supervised contact and an expert report was commissioned. The conclusion of the report was that the child's statement did not confirm sexual abuse, was a misunderstanding, and was not to be taken seriously due to age.

Contact continued, and the child was to receive psychological support. The father never agreed to therapy, so—despite five attempts—it was not initiated. The child showed signs of overload, and two paediatricians recommended therapy. The Youth Welfare Office in Starnberg confirmed the father's refusal of therapeutic measures. I made no further efforts, as I wanted to avoid additional stress for the child and feared losing custody if I went to court.

The father moved close to me and our child and bought the child a dog. He regularly waited for the child on the way to school. He lured the child using the dog, which the child was only allowed to see in his presence.

Three years later I suffered a serious accident and had surgery, followed by three weeks of rehabilitation. Our child was to stay with grandparents and visit me daily, as the rehab clinic was only 5 km away. The father applied for an emergency injunction that the child should stay with him during the three-week rehabilitation period.

I brought our child to him the day before the court hearing and agreed to the child staying with him during my rehabilitation. Nevertheless, I was ordered to pay all legal costs.

One month later, the father applied for a main custody transfer and transfer of residence determination rights. This was granted by the District Court of Starnberg without hesitation, with the justification that the mother was allegedly "attachment-intolerant," without obtaining an expert report. I then filed an appeal with the Higher Regional Court of Munich. The residence determination right was returned to me, but the relocation order remains in force.

Anonymous Report 38

- Institutional violence (court, legal guardian, youth welfare office)
- Therapy of my son in a university clinic with the diagnosis of trauma, caused by violence, presumably sexual abuse within the family (child repeatedly mentions father in this context)
- Report against the child's father for possible sexual abuse of our child, proceedings were dropped due to lack of evidence
- Expert in family court claims that the university clinic report is wrong, that no abuse occurred with the father, but that the mother is crazy (suicide risk, possible double suicide risk without examination!), immediate relocation of the child from the mother with police force to the father, who had previously been excluded from visitation; danger report to the youth welfare office by the treating university clinic (which diagnosed trauma), the danger report was ignored
- After 1.5 years of fighting, it was finally proven that the expert witness lied in court, decision from the Higher Regional Court: the expert was removed from the case due to bias. Still, nothing changed for my child and me. After a long struggle, we finally got a 50:50 shared custody arrangement with the father. Without ever clearing up the suspicion of sexual abuse.

Anonymous Report 39

At the 5th hearing, full custody of my 5-year-old son was given to the father. My right to be heard was ignored (I had a stomach virus on the day of the hearing, medical certificate not accepted). The father's hospital report was ignored (multiple suicide attempts, high narcissistic personality traits, desire to die for over 30 years). Documentation of my child's statements and incidents was ignored, which clearly show that he is being manipulated, pressured, and made afraid!

The judge changed my son's statement from 'I want to stay with my mom and not just visit' to 'the child expresses that he wants to live with his dad!'

The judge put my son under pressure with leading questions, and the guardian ad litem even went along with it!

Psychoterror, pressure, lies, threats, blackmail, constant motions, and much more for 5 years... the system fails completely! There's nothing and no one for the CHILD, and certainly nothing for the MOM or FAMILY either.

Anonymous Report 40

I was abused and sexually exploited in my relationship. My children witnessed parts of this and reported it to third parties. Both daycare and a family counselling service filed child welfare reports. In subsequent family court proceedings, an expert report was commissioned. I was accused of manipulating the children. As a result, I lost custody and my children now live with their father. After making my experiences public and launching a petition, this was used against me. Contact with my children was restricted to supervised visitation and at times monitored by two professionals. I continue to be pressured because of my petition. At the same time, criminal investigations are ongoing against the father, including allegations of domestic violence and suspected sexual offences. I wish that victims of violence and their children are better protected and heard in the future.

Anonymous Report 41

My name is Marina Schreiner (pseudonym to protect my child and myself).

I experienced psychological violence, control, and sexual assault in my marriage. After separation, the violence did not end. In family court proceedings, the context of violence was largely ignored. Instead, I was expected to cooperate with the abusive parent. Parts of my statements were questioned or classified as parental conflict.

I lost custody before my child later moved to another European country. I was not even informed in advance about the move. Today my child lives about 800 km away. It was particularly distressing that I was criticised for seeking protection in a women's shelter. Meanwhile, the other parent gained increasing decision-making power. Proceedings are still ongoing. My child lives with loyalty conflicts, and I live with the consequences of years of trauma. My experience is that protection against violence in family court proceedings often takes a back seat to contact and cooperation requirements.

Anonymous Report 42

I am very concerned that the principles of the Istanbul Convention are not being implemented in Germany. In particular, comprehensive protection from violence for mother and child and the criminal prosecution and punishment of perpetrators is not taking place.

During my pregnancy, I was subjected to domestic violence by the child's father. As a result, my daughter was born extremely prematurely weighing about 800 grams and fought for her life for months. A restraining order was issued against the father.

For six years I cared for my daughter, attended all medical and therapeutic treatments, and supported her development. In 2020, my daughter was removed from my care and placed in a children's home by the German Youth Welfare Office due to intentional defamation by the violent father.

Despite the history of domestic violence, the father was granted sole custody. My daughter remains in the children's home, contact has been repeatedly restricted, and no reunification plan has been developed. I have incurred substantial legal and expert costs and now face significant financial hardship.

I respectfully ask the Council of Europe to examine whether domestic violence against mothers and their children is being adequately considered in German family court and child welfare proceedings, as required by the Istanbul Convention.

Anonymous Report 43

In the past four years, I have witnessed how within the judiciary in Lower Saxony—from the Public Prosecutor’s Office Oldenburg to the Ministry of Justice of Lower Saxony—the Istanbul Convention is systematically disregarded. Across all levels, statements on this are refused. The violations relate, after intensive review, to Articles 5(1)(2), 18(1–3), 25, 49(1–2), 50(1–2), 51(1), and 56(1a) of the Istanbul Convention.

Four recordings of the alleged night of rape were not secured for over a year despite knowledge of them. The case was closed due to lack of evidence without further investigation. After submission of the recordings, all authorities refused to comment on their content and responded only formally and negatively, while access to the files continues to be denied without explanation. Both the victim, her lawyer, and I are systematically ignored.

Anonymous Report 44

Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention obliges authorities and courts, when deciding on custody and visitation, to take violence against women into account and ensure that the rights and safety of victims and children are not endangered.

In our case, documented incidents of psychological and domestic violence exist. Criminal proceedings for stalking are still pending against the father. After separation, there were repeated contacts via WhatsApp and telephone, manipulation of my vehicle by deflating tires, and threats. The existing risk situation led to a protection order, which was extended for another six months. In addition, repeated drive-bys in my environment continue.

Nevertheless, unsupervised contact with our 3.5-year-old child is being considered. This raises the impression that the documented history of violence, ongoing safety risks, and the impact on the child and caregiving parent are not being sufficiently considered. This raises serious questions regarding the implementation of Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention.

Happening currently in Bremen / Lower Saxony courts (Geedtdland).

Anonymous Report 45

Failure of protection through child relocation (March 2023): The case documents a breach of Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention, which requires consideration of domestic violence in custody decisions. A six-month restraining order against the father was in place. Immediately after it expired, the Youth Welfare Office and Social Psychiatric Service Hellersdorf in Berlin undermined the protection mandate. A healthy, well-cared-for, happy 11-month-old child was forcibly removed from the protecting mother without a court order. Authorities relied on an ad hoc claim of alleged maternal psychological instability, which was refuted as incorrect by the Charité Berlin. The child was then, again without court order, transferred by the Youth Welfare Office Berlin-Hellersdorf within two days to the previously violent father, with whom there was no bond. This undermined protection and caused severe institutional attachment trauma.

Anonymous Report 46

Institutionalised violence and denial of contact: In November 2025, disregard for the Istanbul Convention reached a new and dangerous level of institutionalised violence. Despite chronic injuries in the diaper and eye area, the Youth Welfare Office ignored its protective obligations under Articles 18 and 56 of the Convention. When a doctor documented a concrete suspicion of abuse due to symmetrical red marks on the inner thighs and the child directly accused the father (“hit by dad”), the Youth Welfare Office Nauen refused referral to a child protection clinic. Instead of separating the alleged perpetrator and securing the child, the dynamic was reversed: the Youth Welfare Office obtained a complete denial of contact for the mother from the family court in Nauen. This represents a severe reversal of victim and perpetrator roles.

Anonymous Report 47

Separated since February 2025. Shared child (21 months). The father of the child exerted severe psychological violence. Conception unclear: no consensual intercourse, suspicion of sedation?

Pregnancy noticed in the 4th month. Parenting counselling was discontinued by the father.

Violation of Article 31 Istanbul Convention: The Youth Welfare Office ignores the violence completely and instead accuses me of attachment intolerance and parenting incapacity because I report psychosomatic reactions of the child after visitation (paediatric report available). I am told to undergo therapy.

The father now has unsupervised contact, although the child shows fear and psychosomatic symptoms. Youth Welfare Office and German Red Cross (which has accompanied 34 visitations so far) act strongly in favour of the father and downplay facts. The judge at the District Court Freiburg says I should be glad that the father wants contact.

The fact that the father holds a second citizenship (Ivory Coast) and could disappear with the child is ignored. Victim–perpetrator reversal and institutional violence create fear for my life and my child's life.

Anonymous Report 48

Individual complaint by a minor girl, her mother, and grandmother to the European Court of Human Rights:

- Despite ex officio investigations against the father for serious sexual child abuse, rejection of urgent family court applications for suspension of contact and sole medical decision-making by the mother,
- inefficient prosecutorial investigations due to failure to seize data carriers and termination due to insufficient suspicion,
- one-year criminal investigations against the mother and grandmother for defamation and storage of their data until 2028,
- rejection of all national legal remedies,
- pending constitutional complaint by the grandmother (lawyer) against costs treatment as if she were a criminal in proceedings for compulsion of prosecution against three officials, and requests to reopen investigations.

Anonymous Report 49

In 2023 I fled with my daughter due to a police protection order. In first instance, the father was convicted of multiple bodily injuries; in final instance he was acquitted. My daughter clearly expressed refusal to see him. In 2025 the Higher Regional Court Schleswig ordered the removal of my daughter and her transfer to the father. The judge stated she would only later examine an existing expert report. The court created irreversible facts.

The hospital reported child endangerment to the Youth Welfare Office because the 6-year-old child refused to be picked up by the father due to severe psychological stress. The child was systematically isolated from me and forced to live with the alleged perpetrator.

Four months after removal I was allowed to see my daughter with supervised contact. In 2026 the father received sole custody. Mother–child contact only with supervision. The daughter is changed in personality. The mother receives no information; further alienation continues.

Anonymous Report 50

The Higher Regional Court (Oberlandesgericht) of Oldenburg disregarded the Istanbul Convention in family court proceedings in April 2025. I appealed against the transfer of sole residence determination rights (ordered by the Oldenburg Family Court in July 2024) to the children's violent father and against the relocation of the children's primary residence to him. The Higher Regional Court of Oldenburg dismissed the appeal. My criminal complaint against the children's father for assaulting me in front of the children during a child handover was interpreted negatively against me and considered to have fueled the alleged high-conflict nature of the case. Joint counseling sessions

were ordered by the court, forcing contact between perpetrator and victim. The children are traumatized and undergoing therapy. The Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) ignores the risk to the children's welfare despite reports from the daycare center and ongoing criminal proceedings.

Anonymous Report 51

In our case, the Istanbul Convention was disregarded in several respects: those involved in the proceedings exerted significant pressure on the parties to reach a settlement in the custody proceedings without first obtaining the police investigation files (Article 48(1) IC). Furthermore, there was a reversal of victim and perpetrator roles, as well as minimization and disregard of the violence committed against the mother and the children (Articles 45 and 46 IC). During the court hearing, the children's legal representative stated that the Istanbul Convention was not legally binding (Article 15 IC).

No risk assessment was carried out by any of the authorities involved (Article 51 IC). A later risk assessment using the GaTe-Rai method identified a very high risk of intimate partner homicide. Although the perpetrator showed no insight into his actions and accepted no responsibility, he was granted supervised contact with the children. At the same time, the court disclosed the protected address (Article 31(1) and (2) IC).

Anonymous Report 52

By chance, I discovered a hidden camera inside the extractor hood in my kitchen. After filing a police report, it was eventually proven that my ex-husband had installed the camera and had secretly monitored and recorded me, my child, and my family for two years. During this period, my ex-husband also publicly threatened me in the street while positioning our child in front of himself and pressing his hands into the child's shoulders. Afterwards, the child said: "Mom, that really hurt." (Documented in a police report.)

I reported all of these facts to the Youth Welfare Office and the children's legal representative. I was not believed and heard statements such as: "That has not been proven." In response to my detailed documentation of the situation, I was told: "You must be crazy."

When my lawyer raised these facts during the court proceedings, and when my ex-husband shouted: "I just wanted to listen to my child and be there during breakfast," the only reaction was shocked faces. Nothing was done to protect me or our child. On the contrary: to this day, I am still required to coordinate arrangements with him, deal with his sudden appearances at my appointments, read emails saying "You were being watched...", and find ways to rebuild a sense of safety and security in our home for myself and my child.

Anonymous Report 53

J. from Bottrop

- Psychological, physical, and sexual violence against the children and me.
- Forced contact arrangements.
- Disregard of the children's wishes.
- Delays in clarifying allegations.
- Facilitation of severe post-separation abuse by institutions.
- Interference of family court proceedings with criminal investigations.
- Victim-blaming that ultimately resulted in the children being taken into care and placed with the perpetrator

Anonymous Report 54

I know your petition through the association Mother-Child Contact Loss (Muki e.V.). Thank you so much for doing this! Here is my personal account. It must be treated anonymously.

"For years, I experienced psychological abuse and post-separation abuse. My two children continue to experience psychological violence to this day. Their father manipulated our daughter so subtly and turned her against me to such an extent that she now completely rejects contact with me. She has

been parentified. She is suffering. She has problems at school and is socially isolated. The Youth Welfare Office merely shrugs its shoulders. They see the situation and know the damage it will cause, but apparently they consider other cases more important because psychological violence remains largely invisible.

My daughter is being failed by the system. She is denied protection from violence because her father opposes it and presents himself very well in family court. His desire for power and control is valued more highly than the protection of the children. Something must change so that children are protected and can live safely and peacefully. Please start paying attention—even to emotional abuse.”

Anonymous Report 55

The following constitutional rights were violated in our case by the court:

Articles 1, 2, 3, and 6(2) and (4) of the German Basic Law, as well as Article 6(1), (2), and (3), and the right to be heard (violations of Articles 2 and 6 of the Basic Law and Articles 14 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights). The rights of the children and my rights as a mother were discriminated against through incorrect findings of fact and false statements made by the children's father in court. My evidence and submissions were ignored, as were the wishes and interests of the children. A methodological critique of the expert report was also completely disregarded, despite multiple criminal investigations pending against the expert witness.

According to Article 3(1), (2), and (3) of the Basic Law, all persons are equal before the law. The decisions violate the prohibition of arbitrariness under Article 3(1). The pseudo-diagnosis of “attachment intolerance” continues to be used as a basis for decisions despite the ruling 1 BvR 1076/23 of 17 November 2023. Two years of supervised contact without any time limit resulted in severe alienation of the children and damaged the mother-child bond.

Anonymous Report 56

In August 2025, after a contact weekend with his father, I had to pick up my older son (then six years old) from kindergarten because he was suffering from nausea and headaches. I had already noticed that he was even more withdrawn than usual after visits with his father, and one of his eyes was severely reddened. He said he could not remember how it had happened. Later, however, he told me that he had been slapped. I had often seen such a red eye before but had never known what caused it. There were also many bruises in unusual places.

Over time, both children made additional statements about violence, as well as death threats against me and my entire family, which they said had come from their father. According to the children, the father hit them on open wounds, shoved them, and pinched them—sometimes so hard that they fell to the ground or hit walls.

My younger son (now five years old) has disclosed the violence to the following people: kindergarten staff, the family court judge, a court-appointed expert, the police, me, and my mother. My older son only told the kindergarten staff and now says that he no longer dares to speak about it because no one helps him and he is afraid.

Over time, the following institutions became involved: the kindergarten, the Youth Welfare Office, the family court, a court-appointed expert, the Child Protection Association, and the public prosecutor's office/police.

No thorough investigation of the violence ever took place. Instead, the court and the expert even considered the possibility that I might have a personality disorder. However, the expert report found no indication of any disorder on my part, while noting a tendency toward psychotic experiences on the father's side.

Outcome for the children: contact with the father was expanded, and he now sees the children more often than before. The public prosecutor's office closed the investigation, even though this was already my second domestic violence case. My children continue to tell me about violence, but they no longer disclose it to anyone else because they are afraid.

Anonymous Report 57

For the child Felix, the Istanbul Convention was not effectively applied. Felix told his mother and grandmother: "Daddy hit me." This statement was not treated as a child protection concern but was instead reinterpreted as alleged influence by the mother.

Signs of distress were ignored or attributed to the mother: diarrhea, sleep problems, fear and freezing before handovers, regression in language and behavior, and statements relating to crying and fear. No open assessment was conducted regarding whether unsupervised contact endangered or overwhelmed Felix.

The mother proposed protective forms of contact: supervised visitation, video or telephone contact, safe handovers, and contact without pressure. The father rejected these protective measures and accepted interruptions in contact. Nevertheless, it was not his refusal that was critically examined; instead, the mother's wish for protection was labeled as "attachment intolerance."

Felix's needs for protection, stability, clarification, and child-appropriate participation were disregarded. Articles 26, 31, and 51 of the Istanbul Convention were effectively ignored.

Anonymous Report 58

Violation of Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention:

"The Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that, in the determination of custody and visitation rights, incidents of violence are taken into account and that the exercise of any visitation or custody rights does not jeopardize the rights and safety of the victim or the children." In my case: The perpetrator/father became the children's primary caregiver and was granted sole responsibility for healthcare decisions.

Anonymous Report 59

I left the father of my child when our son was eleven and a half months old. After years of subtle psychological abuse, he crossed a red line through physical violence. I fled with my child to a women's shelter.

Instead of protection, however, I experienced pressure. A male employee from the Youth Welfare Office called me up to three times a day demanding that I hand over my baby to the father, including overnight stays. A father who, only one week earlier, did not know how to prepare a bottle of milk was suddenly considered a competent parent.

Court proceedings and meetings with the Youth Welfare Office followed. At a counseling center, a counselor shouted at me and demanded to know how much contact I would be willing to allow at most. My arguments concerning the child's welfare were ignored. Between the lines, there was always a threat of coercive measures.

Since then, I have avoided the Youth Welfare Office. Psychological violence is extremely difficult to prove. When institutions fail to recognize these dynamics, this cannot be considered protection from violence in the spirit of the Istanbul Convention.

Anonymous Report 60

During my marriage, I experienced all forms of domestic violence. After the separation, all institutions favored the perpetrator, disadvantaged me, and prevented the protection of my children.

Article 26: During a meeting with three strangers, the Youth Welfare Office interpreted my children's silence as evidence that no violence had occurred. A child protection clinic assessment was rejected for cost reasons, despite incidents confirmed by the children to a court-appointed expert. Instead, these statements were reinterpreted as manipulation by me.

Article 50: The police did not respond immediately to an emergency call concerning domestic violence. They arrived later, after the situation had calmed down, resulting in no protective measures and further escalation.

Article 31: Under the threat of losing my children, I agreed to a shared parenting arrangement, which has since been used as an instrument of continued control. Child support services have refused to assist me.

Article 48: Under the threat of a €25,000 penalty, I am required to participate in counseling sessions with the perpetrator, where accusations against me continue.

Anonymous Report 61

When my children were very young—my daughter only three months old and my son two and a half years old—I had to flee domestic violence with them. The children's father endangered them through his fits of rage and aggressive outbursts.

After a particularly severe outburst in our shared apartment, during which he destroyed property, insulted me, told me to “get the hell out,” and endangered the children, I saw no alternative but to flee with them to my parents' home for safety and protection.

Initially, the children's father admitted in court that he was not only addicted to gambling but also had serious anger management problems. He stated that he had “exploded like a bomb, even in the presence of the children.” Later, he withdrew these statements.

The incidents of violence and aggression were not unsupported allegations. There were video recordings, witnesses, and observations from neighbors. There was also a documented hospital incident in which the children's father behaved aggressively toward nursing staff. Nurses noticed the smell of alcohol, and the police had to be called.

Nevertheless, court decisions referred merely to my “departure,” although in reality it was a flight to safety. Instead of focusing on the protection of the children and the consequences of domestic violence, my statements were questioned. Ultimately, sole custody and the children themselves were awarded to the abusive father.

In my view, the Istanbul Convention was not implemented. My escape from violence did not result in protection—it resulted in the loss of my two young children.

Anonymous Report 62

Over the four years since our separation, there have been twelve court proceedings. Throughout this time, I have experienced extreme psychological and financial abuse. For years, the children's father struggled with alcohol abuse, neglected the children, and subjected them to violence. I provided evidence for all of this, including statements made by the children. Nevertheless, the children were relocated to live with him.

He was required to keep me informed regarding healthcare decisions and was not permitted to remove the children from their school because of their social ties. Instead, he applied for disability care levels for the children, enrolled them in a new school, and refused to provide health insurance cards during contact visits.

The situation reached a new peak when he initiated two further court proceedings. He sought sole custody and the complete exclusion of my contact with the children. To support his claims, he falsified a medical report in an attempt to “prove” that I was violent.

During the hearing, the children testified that there was no violence in my home and that they no longer wanted to spend so much time with their father but wished to return to live with me.

The judge ignored the fraud, despite our evidence and possession of the genuine medical report. Instead, he was encouraged to withdraw his applications and attend family therapy.

This constitutes financial and psychological abuse.

Anonymous Report 63

The Istanbul Convention is not being taken into account in any way. Violence is ignored, and children have been relocated to live with the perpetrator.

The expert report states that the father lacks emotional self-regulation, which could have devastating consequences for the children. This became evident in an incident involving a knife in the presence of the mother. The report also notes that the children avoid and ignore their father, show no natural joy

in his presence, have no meaningful attachment to him, regularly vomit before handovers to him, miss their mother, and want to be with her.

Nevertheless, it was recommended that the children should live with the father, while the mother would only be allowed supervised contact for a few hours at a time because of an alleged “attachment intolerance.” Today, my child repeatedly shakes their head and spins in circles.

Anonymous Report 64

Janine, teacher, Bavaria

Munich Family Court, Munich Mitte Youth Welfare Office, Munich I Public Prosecutor’s Office:

- Despite years of physical, psychological, and verbal violence, multiple death threats, and more than 100 pieces of evidence, my application for protection from violence was ignored.
- Instead of conducting a risk assessment and providing protection, the court imposed a “nest model” arrangement, threatened me with the loss of custody, and enforced a 50/50 shared-care arrangement.
- The Youth Welfare Office and the children's legal representative supported these measures.
- The children, aged five and ten, who had witnessed the violence, were not interviewed about the incidents, and no comprehensive child welfare assessment was carried out.
- Instead of receiving protection after fleeing, I was advised to seek therapy.
- My criminal complaint and the perpetrator's counter-complaint were treated as equivalent, and mediation was initially proposed.
- Despite further evidence, the investigation was discontinued under Section 153a of the German Code of Criminal Procedure.
- The perpetrator, who herself worked for the Youth Welfare Office, faced no criminal, family-law, or employment-related consequences.

This is how I experienced the disregard of the Istanbul Convention.

Anonymous Report 65

I am Polish, studied political science, and worked in a law firm. My case is being heard before the Family Court of Quedlinburg.

- While pregnant, I sought refuge in a women's shelter because of physical and psychological violence committed by my ex-partner. Later, I obtained a protection order because he continued to be violent, including in the presence of our child.
- Since October 2024, a criminal investigation has been ongoing concerning suspected sexual abuse of our daughter. The investigation concerns the father, grandfather, grandmother, and aunt, and there are witnesses.
- Before filing the criminal complaint, I actively supported contact between father and child. Only afterwards did I restrict contact in order to protect my daughter.
- Nevertheless, the family court twice ordered unsupervised visitation. The Federal Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights rejected my complaints.
- I protected my child and was punished with a coercive fine for doing so.
- Neither the public prosecutor's office nor the family court informed the school authorities or the school itself; the father continues to work as a teacher.
- The court-appointed expert accuses me of parental alienation and recommends removing my child from my care and placing her with the father, despite the absence of reliable evidence against me.

Anonymous Report 66

I am a victim of many years of documented domestic violence (including violence committed in front of the child) and stalking by the children's father, including robbery and burglary. Three restraining orders were issued against him.

A family court expert report confirmed the allegations of violence and his emotional instability.

Despite references to the Istanbul Convention, I was nevertheless required to personally hand over the child in front of my home, despite the existence of a property ban imposed on the children's

father by my landlord. The judge responsible for both the family law proceedings and the protection orders placed almost exclusive responsibility for the overall situation on me in his ruling. The stalking was not even mentioned in the original judgment. In the published version, eight pages—including all references to domestic violence—were anonymized and removed. My experiences of violence and the protection needs of both my child and myself were effectively disregarded. Despite proven violence, the protection of mother and child was subordinated to the contact interests of the abusive parent.

Anonymous Report 67

Munich Family Court and Munich Higher Regional Court:

For seven years, I have been involved in family court proceedings initiated by the children's father. During this time, I have experienced that indications of psychological abuse and abusive litigation tactics are not being taken into account.

Although the children's father has regular contact with the child, he has filed more than fifteen court applications against me and, in some cases, against members of my family. Every single proceeding creates renewed stress, pressure to justify myself, and significant emotional and financial burdens. Instead of examining possible patterns of control, intimidation, and the instrumentalization of family court proceedings, the allegations are repeatedly revisited, while my reports of psychological abuse receive no attention.

As a result, I have the impression that the protection of victims takes a back seat to the procedural processing of applications.

Particularly distressing is the fact that an unjustified court order imposed a "100-meter no-approach order" against me, even though I consider myself a victim of psychological violence. This creates the impression of a reversal of victim and perpetrator roles and reinforces my sense that neither mother nor child is adequately protected.

In my experience, the Istanbul Convention's requirements to consider contexts of violence and avoid re-traumatization have not been sufficiently upheld in my case.

Anonymous Report 68

Hello Christina,

We experienced the same thing for years. Shortly after the hearing began, the court psychologist stated that she wanted police protection. Two police officers were present. They stood directly behind the father and were waiting for the judge's authorization to arrest him. It never came.

For three hours, the father was allowed to verbally attack and degrade me in court. I was not allowed to say a single word.

According to him, none of the acts of violence had ever happened. Stalking was supposedly not that serious. Intercepting the child was also considered perfectly acceptable because, after all, he was the father. The fact that he had once tried to kill me in front of numerous witnesses was said to be "in the past," and therefore no contact prohibition was imposed.

The trauma remains profound.

The child is now living in a residential care facility. Since then, the father has become less active. He pursued the matter all the way to the Higher Regional Court. He has never paid child support.

Anonymous Report 69

U., social worker, Bavaria

In 2019/2020, after 17 years together, I separated from the father because of coercive control, boundary violations, stalking, psychological abuse, and digital violence.

The father has continued to exert violence against both me and our son to this day. Professionals had been informed since 2019. Reports from experts at school, occupational therapy, and a mother-child rehabilitation program were ignored by the court.

There have been six court proceedings. First, our child was moved from living primarily with me into a shared-care arrangement despite the father's violence. Later, our child was relocated to live with the father, and I lost custody.

Our child's condition continues to deteriorate and now includes self-harming behavior. The courts ignore this.

On several occasions, our child's right to a judicial hearing and to a children's legal representative was disregarded.

Violence by the father and institutional violence continue, including being shouted at by professionals, victim-blaming, the disregard of evidence, and coercion to maintain contact with the father.

The father has faced no consequences.

Anonymous Report 70

After I reported my husband for serious homicide offenses, the police classified the case as a recognized high-risk case and conducted a case conference. The officers advised me not to allow the children to have unsupervised contact with their father. The Youth Welfare Office twice issued written recommendations in favor of supervised contact, but the court did not respond.

The Youth Welfare Office then threatened to take the children into protective custody if I handed them over to their father without supervision. The judge threatened the Youth Welfare Office employee with a disciplinary complaint and accused her of exceeding her authority. The employee was subsequently removed from the case.

For the period during which the Youth Welfare Office demanded supervised contact and even threatened me with the removal of my children (all documented in writing), I was fined €2,400. The Higher Regional Court repeatedly rejected my appeals.

The father has now been prohibited from practicing medicine for eight months. The bodies of a double-digit number of deceased persons have been exhumed, and a special police task force of up to 25 officers has worked on the case. The father is accused of murdering elderly, disabled, and seriously ill people.

Nevertheless, the Elmshorn Family Court granted the father the right to determine the residence of two disabled young children. According to the court expert, I was considered "attachment intolerant" because I wanted supervised contact only for a person who had never previously cared for the children and who was under suspicion for such serious crimes.

Because the professional ban allegedly eliminates any risk of reoffending, the father has not been held in pre-trial detention. My children are completely at his mercy.

The Family Court and the new Youth Welfare Office employee consistently disregarded the Istanbul Convention. Because I am a physician specializing in child and adolescent psychiatry and repeatedly referred to the Convention, it was simply interpreted differently in court.

This case is beyond comprehension. Every day, I can only pray that my children survive and do not become victims of an extended suicide committed by their father.

Anonymous Report 71

In March 2026, we were deprived of custody of our two daughters (aged eight years and eight months) in our absence. We had not been summoned to the court hearing.

The measure was initiated following reports made by the biological father of my older daughter, even though he had previously admitted that he had fabricated an earlier child welfare endangerment report against me.

It appears that this was intended to prevent my husband and me from emigrating to Italy with our children.

Shortly after a phone call to the family court on March 27, 2026, a large police force stormed our accommodation. In a subsequent order, the judge declared the first order legally binding despite the fact that it had never been formally served and authorized the most severe measures against us.

Our children were taken into care against our will, even though no acute risk to their welfare had been identified.

In fact, the only demonstrable threat to the children's welfare arose as a result of their removal from our care.

Our eight-year-old daughter was subsequently placed with her biological father, despite ongoing criminal proceedings against him, including allegations of sexual abuse against her.

Applications by my mother and sister to provide kinship care were not implemented.

To this day, we have never been personally heard. No care plan has ever been created, and reunification has been categorically ruled out.

We regard this as a serious violation of children's rights to protection, attachment, and family relationships.

Anonymous Report 72

I am a teacher from Hamburg and survived severe psychological, financial, and physical violence committed by my former partner, the father of my daughter. The violence repeatedly took place in the presence of our daughter.

Although an application for protection from violence was initially granted in 2020, a shared-care arrangement requested twice by the perpetrator was imposed against my wishes in 2022.

Despite the history of violence, I was repeatedly required to attend joint hearings and parental counseling sessions with him.

He exerted massive influence over our daughter, leading her to adopt his perspective in court while her psychological condition deteriorated.

In 2024, the father was granted primary residence of the child. Afterwards, contact between my daughter and me increasingly broke down, and visitation ceased entirely.

In 2026, he was additionally granted the right to determine her residence and make decisions regarding her education, despite multiple reports of risks to her welfare from the school and the Youth Welfare Office.

After he moved to a city 400 kilometers away, I now have no contact with my daughter at all.

Anonymous Report 73

For years, I was subjected to coercive control by the children's father. He controlled my food, clothing, medical appointments, working hours, social contacts, and finances. I was not even able to access my own salary account.

During the final year before our separation, he verbally humiliated me on a daily basis, often in front of our child.

Three months after the separation, he committed a serious sexual assault against me and threatened to take our child away from me.

I sought refuge in a women's shelter for six weeks.

Nevertheless, the Husum Family Court transferred the child's primary residence to the father and ordered me to participate in joint mediation sessions with him. During one of these sessions, he threatened to kill me.

Following this incident, a police risk assessment classified the risk of femicide as "high risk."

Our child also disclosed actions that, in my view, constituted sexual abuse by both the father and grandmother.

The Youth Welfare Office and the Family Court rejected my applications for protection from violence for both myself and my child.

For six months, I have been prohibited from seeing my child.

This constitutes a disregard of Articles 31 and 48 of the Istanbul Convention by German authorities.

Anonymous Report 74

In my case, I believe that the state's duty to protect my children was seriously neglected. A family psychology expert concluded that it was more likely that my daughter had been sexually abused by her father than that no abuse had occurred. Despite this assessment, no protective measures were taken. Instead, the focus increasingly shifted away from protection. The fears expressed by my children and their clear wish to remain with their primary caregiver were ultimately disregarded. In the end, the children were separated from me against their stated wishes and relocated to live with their father. I experienced this as institutional violence: indications of danger did not result in protection. My case raises the question of how the Istanbul Convention can be effectively implemented if even serious indications of sexualized violence and a child's clearly expressed wishes fail to trigger meaningful protective measures.

Anonymous Report 75

I am the mother of a three-year-old daughter and have been separated from her father since my pregnancy. During the relationship, I experienced violence and sexualized violence. In the family court proceedings, these experiences were not sufficiently taken into account. Particularly distressing was the fact that the father's contact with our child was significantly expanded while criminal investigations concerning the rape I experienced were still ongoing. Instead of applying the Istanbul Convention, the proceedings repeatedly focused on my alleged "attachment tolerance." I was made to feel that speaking about the violence could be held against me and might even affect decisions concerning my child's primary residence. The protection needs of mother and child were pushed into the background. At the same time, considerable pressure was placed on me to reach out-of-court agreements despite a clear imbalance of power. Many affected women in Saarland report similar experiences. However, because of close regional networks and dependencies, many are afraid of negative consequences and therefore do not speak publicly about their experiences.

Anonymous Report 76

I have been a victim of psychological abuse and post-separation abuse by my ex-husband for almost 25 years. I sought help from public institutions because there was documented child abuse, documented threats against my life and the lives of my family members, documented alcohol abuse in the presence of the children, stalking, digital violence aimed at gaining complete control over the lives of my children and myself, financial abuse, and more. All of this was known to the authorities. Unfortunately, I learned that I not only had reason to fear the children's father, but also the institutions themselves. I experienced severe victim-blaming, minimization of the perpetrator's actions, and defamatory statements about me. In my specific case, the Istanbul Convention was not merely ignored; worse, I believe I was knowingly harmed despite clear awareness of the circumstances. Protection from violence for women and children is being seriously neglected, and the Istanbul Convention is not being implemented in any meaningful way. In addition to fearing my ex-husband, I now fear the institutions as well. My children and I have experienced traumatic events—not only because of the children's father, but also because of the institutions that were supposed to protect us.

Anonymous Report 77

I am a social worker in Berlin and advise mothers and children affected by domestic violence. Many of my clients report serious problems in their dealings with youth welfare offices and family courts. Violence is often not taken seriously, even in cases involving criminal complaints and violence against children.

The minimization of violence, as well as a lack of understanding of violence dynamics and perpetrator strategies, forces victims to spend their limited resources dealing with institutions. These resources are then no longer available for supporting their children emotionally or maintaining their own well-being.

Particularly troubling is the fact that Berlin's youth welfare offices have no binding quality standards regarding domestic violence.

Families are frequently classified as "high-conflict" and receive inappropriate interventions designed for cooperative conflicts rather than one-sided patterns of abuse.

In some cases, victims are initially denied the opportunity to have individual meetings without the perpetrator present.

We recommend invoking the Istanbul Convention, but even this is sometimes insufficient, forcing victims to file formal complaints before their concerns are addressed.

When violence is cautiously disclosed, it is often not investigated further, and external specialists are required to explain to staff how the consequences of violence manifest themselves.

There is frequently a lack of basic knowledge regarding trauma-informed practice. This reinforces the impression among affected women that, in Germany, perpetrators are protected while women affected by violence are not.

Anonymous Report 78

I would like to share my personal experience.

During the family court proceedings, I repeatedly had the impression that my experiences, burdens, and perceptions were not taken seriously enough. Incidents during child handovers, including one situation in which the children's father held me against my will at my car, were, in my view, not given appropriate consideration. I found the judge's statement that "there are worse things" particularly hurtful. Throughout the proceedings, I often felt that the father's account of events was given more weight than mine.

Similarly, during discussions with the Youth Welfare Office, I frequently felt that my experiences and concerns were not adequately heard. What is especially distressing is that my parenting abilities are now being scrutinized. My son is fourteen years old and has expressed his own memories, perceptions, and feelings. Nevertheless, I gained the impression that his statements were not taken as seriously as those of others. Regardless of the outcome of the proceedings, I hope that the perspectives of both children and mothers will be respected equally and examined without preconceived assumptions.

Anonymous Report 79

Despite substantial indications of psychological abuse, threats, insults, neglect of parental responsibilities, and ongoing safety concerns (including an incident in which the child touched an electrical socket while in the father's care), my submissions were, in my view, not given sufficient consideration by either the Youth Welfare Office or the Family Court.

For several months, the father neither exercised his visitation rights nor fulfilled his parental responsibilities. To date, he has made only three child support payments over a period of two years. He did not disclose his financial circumstances until December, and only after criminal proceedings for failure to provide child support were threatened.

At the same time, my application to relocate to Bavaria for professional reasons was denied, despite having received a job offer there with a salary approximately 40% higher than my current position.

I view this as an example of institutional disregard for post-separation abuse and an inadequate consideration of both the best interests of the child and the requirements of the Istanbul Convention.

Anonymous Report 80

A failure to uphold the protective principles of the Istanbul Convention, as well as insufficient consideration of protection from violence, occurred in our case despite repeated reports and warnings.

Reports of domestic violence, psychological abuse, and post-separation abuse concerning the experiences of violence described by both my son and me were not adequately taken into account. Instead of prioritizing the protection of the child and the prevention of further violence, contact and visitation arrangements continued to be given precedence, while the violence itself was ignored. This disregard occurred on the part of the Youth Welfare Office, the Local Court, the Higher Regional Court, and the court-appointed guardian ad litem.

The impact of the violence on the child's health, development, and safety did not receive the necessary attention. As a result, there was a clear impression that existing risks were being minimized and that protective measures were not being adequately implemented. In my view, this is inconsistent with the objectives of the Istanbul Convention.

Anonymous Report 81

I am Marie, 41 years old, and the mother of Wyn, age 7, who has now been forced to live without contact with me for almost two years in the household of our abuser. Early in the proceedings, I compiled a list of all legal violations that my son and I experienced, many of which were exacerbated by the family court proceedings themselves. These included more than 30 (!) violations of the Istanbul Convention. We experienced every form of violence addressed by the Convention.

My knowledge of the Istanbul Convention, my references to it before the parties involved in the proceedings, and my pointing out of violations ultimately resulted in the removal of my parental rights and the forcible placement of my child with the perpetrator. All of the violations mentioned can be documented individually.

However, to quote our judge, Ms. Alexandra Hirsekorn: "I don't give a damn what the Federal Constitutional Court and the European Court of Justice say!" In my experience, this attitude reflects the understanding that continues to prevail in family court proceedings in Germany to this day.

Anonymous Report 82

As a mother of three children, I have endured nearly ten years of what I can only describe as a legal ordeal:

- Institutional violence by the Youth Welfare Office and the courts, including disregard for the best interests of the child and the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.
- Victim-blaming and victim disbelief, accompanied by a failure to provide protection from violence.
- The trivialization of domestic, sexualized, and psychological violence committed by the children's father against my children and me.
- The dismissal of his threats, including death threats, against us, as well as the continuation of unrestricted and escalating visitation arrangements that caused further trauma to my children.
- Ongoing post-separation abuse to this day, alongside a continued lack of support for my children.

Anonymous Report 83

My former partner was psychologically, physically, and economically abusive toward me. He secretly consumed alcohol, concealed his unemployment for more than one and a half years, filmed me

without my consent, and took my car keys, preventing me from getting to work at times. The children repeatedly witnessed these incidents.

During one assault, he trapped my lower leg in a sliding-door wardrobe, causing a severe hematoma. The Local Court acknowledged the risk posed to me, granted me exclusive use of the marital home, and issued both a contact ban and a restraining order.

Despite repeatedly violating these orders, he filed appeals. The appellate court upheld the protective measures. However, following a further appeal, the Higher Regional Court overturned the protection order. One of the reasons given was that I had continued to live in the same apartment with him for approximately two and a half months after the incident.

In my view, this decision fails to adequately consider the dynamics of domestic violence and the realities faced by victims, and it stands in tension with the objectives of effective victim protection under the Istanbul Convention.

Anonymous Report 84

- Difficult on-off relationship including narcissistic abuse; my separation was never accepted.
- Unwanted pregnancy in 2018 --> immediate no-contact order because the father increasingly lashed out "for no reason"; the child was born in 2019.
- After 1.5 years of no contact, the father suddenly showed up at my door in 2020, and I allowed visitation, but he soon threatened in tears that he feared he could kill me and the baby.
- I was already exhausted from the relationship, the post-separation violence, and being a single mother, but afterward, I suffered from persistent anxiety, sometimes even fear of death.
- I refused further contact; this was followed by threats and baseless accusations from those involved.
- I attended all appointments, cared for our son, and worked; he didn't!
- Nobody took me seriously.
- 2021: My lawyer resigned two days before the court date when I brought up the Istanbul Convention.
- I went to court alone and lost my son to the perpetrator.

Anonymous Report 85

I was raped by a local celebrity in Nettetal. The city administration, the mayor, and the youth welfare office are aware of the situation. My ex-wife had already filed a lengthy complaint there. However, I, as an unmarried woman who had been raped and subsequently became a mother, received no help. Instead, my child was denied assistance, taken into care, and custody was transferred to the potent father. My appeal to the Düsseldorf Family Senate was fruitless—quite the opposite, in fact; three female judges even threatened me. A subsequent lawsuit for official liability at the Higher Regional Court, presided over by Dr. Thönnissen, was also a disaster: "You are a mother fighting for yourself and your child. But let me tell you one thing: I am in charge here!"

Anonymous Report 86

My name is Nadine, I have a ten-year-old son and an eight-year-old daughter. I want to draw attention to what I see as the inadequate implementation of the Istanbul Convention and the insufficient protection against violence in my case. My children and I have experienced violence at the hands of their father. I have repeatedly sought help from the Main-Taunus district youth welfare office, the police, and in court. Instead of receiving protection, I lost custody. In my view, the statements and experiences of my children and myself were not given sufficient consideration. Despite serious allegations of mistreatment and abuse against their father, contact with the children continues. It is particularly worrying that my son continues to experience violence. In a recent incident, he even felt compelled to call the police himself. Nevertheless, no protective measures were taken. I remain deeply concerned about the safety and well-being of my children and hope that their protection will finally be the top priority.

Anonymous Report 87

My name is Tina, I am a teacher. I separated from my father in 2019. I'm being accused of attachment intolerance. My son lives with his father against his will. He's being abused there. He's repeatedly stated that his father hits him. He had to go to his father, and I was given a restraining order. My son wants to live with me. He wrote a letter to the court. But the court says: "Manipulated by the mother!" The father was granted sole custody, and I supervised visits. The father's violence is legally recognized. Article 31 of the Interstate Treaty on Child Support is being disregarded. The court claims my attachment intolerance is severely limited, citing my years of unequivocal reporting of the father's violence! I'm trapped in the "fixed idea" that my son's father is violent! My son told the judge, among others, that his father beats him. The courts are ignoring him. The father's violence is known, downplayed, and ignored! We receive no protection.

Anonymous Report 88

For years, I've experienced post-separation violence and coercive control by my child's father. Psychological and physical violence against me is documented. My daughter has been the victim of documented physical violence and suspected sexual abuse. My mother was also a victim of physical violence. Despite this, the youth welfare office, the court-appointed guardian, and the court have not used these contexts of violence as the starting point for effective protection. Instead, the child's welfare has been shifted to me, and I'm also experiencing massive institutional violence. My daughter is now five years old, severely psychologically distressed, and her need for therapy has been known and medically documented since 2024. I've been fighting for help ever since, but those involved in the proceedings have failed to secure protection and therapy. A measure initially presented as support has turned into a de facto forced relocation to her father's home. Reinterpreted. For me, my case demonstrates a disregard for the Istanbul Convention.

Anonymous Report 89

I experienced the following in relation to the Public Prosecutor's Office in Kempten:

- Situation following sexual abuse of my daughter by her father
- The statement-psychology expert report concludes that there may have been self-suggestion by the mother with a mistaken transfer onto the child
- Termination of the criminal investigation proceedings
- Disregard for the best interests of the child
- Victim-perpetrator reversal

Anonymous Report 90

GREVIO report "Protection from Violence in Germany":

- Separation following a violent relationship in 2022 (emotional, psychological, mental, verbal, social, financial violence; narcissistic abuse → coercive control)
- Various court proceedings enabled the father to continue exercising power and control over the mother by instrumentalizing the child (born 2017) as a weapon, while committing abuse without consequences. On the contrary, he received support from family courts and youth welfare offices.
- Psychological and physical violence by the father against the child is facilitated and reinforced by various court orders (now confirmed by a child protection clinic). The child is forced to sleep at the father's home against their will.
- Children's rights & fundamental human rights have been massively violated over many years.

The child is now ill as a result of individual and institutional violence and abuse, as well as a failure to provide assistance, and is under intensive therapeutic care:

- Complex post-traumatic stress disorder (including attachment trauma)
- Emotional and behavioral disorder of childhood, regressive and oppositional
- Suspected obsessive-compulsive disorder

Anonymous Report 91

After separation from the father of my child (following severe psychological violence), and despite increasing behavioural issues in my son after contact visits with his father, the court ordered unsupervised contact.

As a result, my child developed anxiety, panic attacks, sleep disorders, developmental delays, psychosomatic symptoms, and sustained significant injuries. He described concrete sexualized violence in the paternal environment. Professionals referred to organized/ritual abuse.

After I filed a criminal complaint in 2022, the child's protection needs were not assessed. Instead, allegations of Munchausen by proxy were made against me. This was followed by institutional violence, removal of custody rights, and the appointment of the Youth Welfare Office as supplementary guardian.

Instead of implementing protective measures for my child and me, contact with the father was expanded.

In 2023, my son was placed in the father's household. In 2024, during the ongoing second criminal complaint, he was fully separated from me. The father was granted sole custody.

For more than 1¾ years, I have been denied contact with my child, and the alleged abuse continues.

Anonymous Report 92

Domestic violence began in 2003, during pregnancy. I separated in 2006. During contact visits, the father told our four-year-old son: "I will kill your mother, then you won't have a mother anymore." At the same time, he searched online for firearms.

The situation continued for years within the youth welfare system and the courts. My ex-partner was consistently non-cooperative (refusing medication adherence, refusing child support, refusing consent for school transitions, abruptly terminating contact visits during weekends, etc.).

Regarding protective measures and my criminal complaint for trespass and bodily harm (2014), the response was dismissive. The father submitted a false sworn statement in court claiming he had never touched me. I was able to refute this.

Nevertheless, contact was ordered. The public prosecutor's office later informed me in writing that there was no public interest in prosecution.

I weighed only 43 kilograms at the time and, due to these circumstances, even had thoughts of ending my life.

Cornelia & Luis

Anonymous Report 93

Failure to protect children's rights in Augsburg:

In 2025, my child wrote a letter in after-school care requesting help because they were afraid of their father after a violent incident. The child stated that they wanted to return to their mother.

In interviews, the child repeatedly expressed—also to the supplementary guardian—that they no longer wanted to go to their father and feared not being able to see their mother again.

The supplementary guardian denied this to the child and shortly thereafter secured a court order granting a full contact ban against me. This lasted eight months.

Since then, I have only been allowed to see my child twice a month for a total of four hours under supervision. Telephone contact is refused by the father, citing the youth welfare office.

The father refuses (unlike me) to undergo a psychiatric assessment of parenting capacity, which has been confirmed for me.

An independent psychiatric evaluation of the child has not taken place.

Anonymous Report 94

Local Court Hildesheim:

This is already the second proceeding in which the Istanbul Convention has been taken into account. Psychological violence against my children and me has occurred. I have experienced financial and

sexual violence. Now parent-child counselling sessions are to take place, and the transfer of custody of my children is being considered.

Anonymous Report 95

Disregard of the Istanbul Convention since 2023:

- 2020: Domestic violence by the child's father (knife attack, police interventions, threat assessment, expulsion).
 - 2022: Discovery of a live hand grenade and ammunition belonging to the child's father; later conviction.
 - 2023: After moving with a restriction notice, the mother was accused of child abduction and forced contact happened despite a contact ban.
 - The youth welfare office informed the family court that the father had been acquitted, even though he had been convicted.
 - 2024–2025: The children's reports of violence and abuse by the father were labeled as "manipulation"; the children were relocated to the father.
 - The higher regional court took up allegations against the mother even though authorities confirmed in writing that no investigations or convictions exist.
 - Despite criminal proceedings against the father, the children are still living with him currently.
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Anonymous Report 96

2022 Separation after domestic violence – no protective measures for mother and child, Early Help Lahr

2023 Custody/Visitation proceedings – no protective measures/recognition of post-separation violence, Lahr District Court, Lahr municipal social services, legal guardian

2024 Custody/Visitation proceedings – no investigation of the daughter's statements about physical/sexual abuse, no response to statements about violence in child hearings, gaslighting and trivialization of violence against the child and mother, also involved: "Aufschrei Offenburg", Childhoodhouse Offenburg; cases 2025: either visitation according to the father's wishes or relocation, judge at Lahr District Court, Lahr municipal social services, legal guardian, expert

2025/2026 Counseling PB Lahr: psychological and physical violence even during counseling sessions is trivialized and tolerated

Anonymous Report 97

We are experiencing extreme institutional violence from the German judiciary. Despite the perpetrator's life-threatening rampage and massive terror, the family court completely ignores protection from violence. My 6-year-old son is demonstrably severely traumatized by these acts (official medical report: PTSD, care level, approved school support due to mental disability). Instead of protecting the children, the court is engaging in massive victim-blaming: I was stripped of visitation rights for my baby and they were transferred to a caregiver who allows the perpetrator to come within 400 meters of our house. The court accuses me of baseless "denial of visitation" and ordered an evaluation against me. The serious, officially proven traumas of the children are dismissed as mere "influence" (PAS). The protection against violence of the Istanbul Convention does not exist for us. The system protects the perpetrator and enforces visitation contacts at the cost of my children's health.

Anonymous Report 98

From my point of view, the following points represent the main violations of the protection standards of the Istanbul Convention in my case: In my case, protection against violence according to Art. 31 of the Istanbul Convention was practically not implemented. Despite documented domestic violence (penalty order for bodily harm, threats, and insults), a restriction on information disclosure, ongoing need for protection, and clear stress reactions from my child, the father's visitation rights were repeatedly prioritized over safety and the consequences of violence. The District Court of Fürth

and the Higher Regional Court of Nuremberg mostly treated the consequences of the violence as a parental conflict or maternal stress. The recommendations of the treating child psychotherapist regarding protection, stabilization, and longer supervised visits were considered not relevant for the decision. The Hersbruck district court also mainly blamed my child's stress reactions on my attitude towards the father, while the father's manipulations and the child's refusal to have contact weren't considered in the same way.

Anonymous Report 99

I am a mother of four children and have been exposed for years to massive domestic and post-separation violence by the children's father (a police officer). After repeated abuse and sexual coercion, I lived for nine months in a women's shelter. Despite the severity of the violence, the father was never held accountable. Since the separation, I have been experiencing systematic institutional post-separation violence.

1. Disregard of the Istanbul Convention: Despite proven violence, the court ordered extended visitation without a protection plan or risk assessment. Mediation was mandated, even though Article 48 prohibits this in cases of violence. Despite a protected address, the father appears at the door, and the visitation supervisor leaves us alone during handovers. He stalks us, exerts massive pressure, and downplays past abuse.
2. Bias: The guardian ad litem/visitation supervisor violates her duty of neutrality by having personal follow-up talks with the perpetrator.
3. Lack of legal protection: Because of the perpetrator's profession, lawyers refuse my case. This is a violation of Article 57 of the Istanbul Convention.
4. Child welfare: The kids are traumatized. The father refuses medical care (asthma inhalers); the youth welfare office does nothing.

Anonymous Report 100

Tina, journalist, two sons, separated in 2020

Attempts of femicide (strangulation, punches, kicks, knife)

Stalking, financial abuse after separation, police involvement, restraining order due to violence against the child.

Kidnapping threats and threats of extended suicide. This was followed by a temporary border restriction. Also: unsupervised visitation and custody for the perpetrator.

2025 child abduction. After that, both children were traumatized and unable to attend school.

2026 followed a cyber-grooming attack on a child. Outcome: risk of suicide and medication.

My eldest is autistic, heavily stressed, and sometimes unable to attend school and in need of care. By now the children are refusing visitation. I am under heavy health strain and have high income losses due to caring for my son.

In court, the legal guardian said: Maybe your son is not autistic but an aggressive idiot. Diagnosis: autism, ADHD, PTSD

The youth welfare office and the court knew about the violence and the planned abduction of the child and did nothing.

Anonymous Report 101

I am a doctor, 39 years old, and mother of two children. After years of domestic and sexualized violence, I initiated a separation from my still-husband through a protection from abuse procedure. In the related court case, my account of three assaults with severe abuse (punches to the face until the eyeball bled, choking, kicking) was laughed at by the opposing attorney. Two of the assaults were admitted to, and one was reduced to "half." That the children had to watch and were involved in verbal attacks against me was ignored. When the youth welfare office cited the Istanbul Convention to request supervised visits, the opposing attorney first had to be informed about it, and the judge did not take it into consideration further. After four months of full-time trauma therapy with the children, the three of us now have to endure weekly visitations; our trauma is not acknowledged in a

single decision-making process or report. The word Istanbul Convention is effectively and meaningfully deleted from my reporting.

Anonymous Report 102

I am the mother of a daughter (born 2023) and have sole custody and the right to determine her residence. Since separating from my child's father, I have been experiencing ongoing psychological stress due to highly contentious family court proceedings, controlling behavior, stalking incidents, and repeated institutional escalations. The child's father gradually moved closer to our home after the birth and now lives just a few house numbers away on the same street.

Despite initially supervised visitation, there was a police intervention due to stalking, applications for travel restrictions, and numerous court cases. Despite documented health consequences for me and indications of possible violence against my child, my need for protection was, in my view, not adequately considered. After a visit, my daughter said that her father had hit her between the legs. I documented the incident and informed the youth welfare office, the pediatrician, and the forensic department. Despite an urgent application on my part, the unaccompanied contact was resumed. In my view, my case highlights shortcomings in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, especially in dealing with psychological abuse and coercive control.

Anonymous Report 103

For several years, my two daughters and I have been seeking protection from physical and psychological violence from the state institutions that are supposed to protect us. In family court proceedings, acts of violence by my former partner and the children's father were repeatedly presented and documented, including with medical records. Nevertheless, neither my children nor I have been effectively protected. The experiences of violence are not given appropriate weight – on the contrary: our search for protection and the children's statements are used against us. The youth welfare office, the legal guardian, and the court do not address the children's need for protection. The perpetrator's perspective shapes the proceedings. Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention is therefore not being upheld. Our case at the Münster District Court is an example of the structural deficiencies in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention that mothers and children affected by violence in Germany continue to experience.

Anonymous Report 104

In my case, I feel that signs of domestic violence and child welfare risks were not adequately taken into account. For years, I was subjected to psychological, verbal, and physical abuse by my child's father. On several occasions, this also happened in the presence of our child. What is particularly shocking is that it was denied that there were any corresponding police interventions, even though these are documented in police reports.

Additionally, there are voice messages and other evidence. Nevertheless, this evidence was not properly considered. Instead, the father's access to the child is supposed to be expanded, even though my son has described experiencing physical assaults by his father. For me, the question arises how documented violence, a child's statements, and existing evidence can be reconciled with the protection mandate under the Istanbul Convention.

Anonymous Report 105

Custody and contact of the mother withdrawn despite years of violence by the father:

For years, our three underage children have been experiencing physical violence from their dad, once life-threatening when he presses the older one face into the snow and only stops when a ski instructor screams. The youngest said: "It's not so bad anymore, dad used to beat me, today he just hits." Therapy for loss of impulse control does not help. He threatens me, last beats me almost 2 years ago. Despite criminal charges and medical documentation of several months of sick leave (concussion, craniocerebral trauma, hematomas, etc.), the judge at the Munich Family Court dismisses this with the words:

"Mei, domestic violence happens from time to time, that doesn't change anything here". On the contrary, the father was awarded sole custody because he lied that I was violent. I am only allowed to see the children every 2nd weekend. I demanded a psychological report that

II. 142 Reports from mothers (already submitted to the Federal Ministry of Justice of Germany)

Christina, 43, Teacher, Baden-Württemberg

My son and I had to experience the following at the Besigheim District Court, Ludwigsburg Youth Welfare Office, Stuttgart Higher Regional Court:

- institutional violence
- trivialization of domestic/psychological violence
- promotion of post-separation violence through forced access of the perpetrator to his victims and relocation of the child to the perpetrator
- disregard of the Istanbul Convention
- disregard of the child's welfare.

Daisy, 44, Lecturer, Saxony

My children and I had to experience the following at Plauen District Court, Vogtland District Youth Welfare Office, as well as through an expert from Falkenstein/Vogtland:

- institutional violence
- trivialization of domestic, psychological violence and post-separation violence
- promotion of post-separation violence through forced access of the perpetrator to his victims
- disregard of the Istanbul Convention
- disregard of the child's welfare.

Michaela, 45, administrative officer, NRW

My children and I had to experience the following at the Krefeld District Court:

- institutional violence
- downplaying of domestic violence/post-separation violence
- promotion of post-separation violence, e.g., through forced access of the perpetrator to his victims and all financial resources
- disregard of the Istanbul Convention
- disregard for the child's welfare

Nadja, 36, psychologist, Mainz, NRW

My child and I experienced the following at the Family Court and Youth Welfare Office in Mainz:

- downplaying of domestic violence and sexual abuse
- twisting and manipulation of the expert report and pathologizing my statements and experiences with the child's father
- complete transfer of custody and decision-making rights to the perpetrator
- removal of my child and placement with the child's father

Catrin, 34, doctor, Schleswig-Holstein

My children and I have experienced severe institutional violence at the Elmshorn District Court.

Marie, 44, Bavaria

My children and I had to experience the following at the Sonthofen District Court and Oberallgäu Youth Welfare Office, etc.:

- institutional violence
- downplaying of domestic, psychological violence/separation-after-violence – promotion of it, e.g., through forced access of the perpetrator to his victims, children living with the perpetrator
- disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- disregard for the best interests of the child.

Liya, 32, housewife, activist, Berlin

My children and I had to experience the following at the Kreuzberg Family Court and the RSD Kreuzberg Youth Welfare Office:

- institutional violence
- downplaying of domestic, sexualized or psychological violence as well as post-separation violence
- promotion of post-separation violence through forced access of the perpetrator to his victims
- disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- disregard for the best interests of the child

A caseworker at the RSD Kreuzberg Youth Welfare Office portrayed me as 'uncooperative' and literally said: 'Even if the father is a rapist or murderer, he has a right to the child.'

The court also downplayed the situation, with statements like: 'Nothing further happened anyway.'

Celine, 38, Marketing Consultant, Brandenburg

My daughter and I have had to experience the following through the Cottbus Youth Welfare Office, the Cottbus District Court, the Brandenburg an der Havel Higher Regional Court, and the psychological expert Annette Kintrup from Berlin:

- Institutional violence
- Downplaying of domestic & psychological violence as well as post-separation abuse
- Promotion of post-separation abuse
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the best interests of the child

Angela, 38, teacher, Bavaria, Traunstein District Court, Bavaria

- Enormous psychological strain on me and my children was ignored; my children were diagnosed with adjustment disorders as a result of loyalty conflicts
- Key psychological dynamics from the marriage were barely considered in the proceedings; instead, the focus was solely on the future
- Referral back and forth between court, youth welfare office, and counseling centers without coordinated, effective support

Anna, 42, occupational therapist, Bremen

I experienced before the district courts Bremen Mitte, Hamburg St. Georg, and Ahrensburg over a total of 13 years

- Disregard of the Istanbul Conventions
- Disregard of the welfare of the children
- Institutional violence
- Promotion of post-separation violence
- Gaslighting by court and mediation
- Blame-shifting by guardians ad litem and judges, mediation, and ex-partner
- Forced contact of the children and myself with a psychologically abusive ex-partner

Nicole, 36 years old, saleswoman, Kodersdorf near Görlitz, Saxony

- At the youth welfare office in Niesky, I experience insults, blackmail + threats
- The father of my child has inflicted very serious bodily harm on me, even attempted murder & murder of an unborn child
- Several attempted manslaughters, stalking
- The Görlitz District Court did not take the violence seriously from the start, did not look at the evidence, moved my daughter to the perpetrator, and allowed only supervised visitation for me as a mother
- Insults from the legal guardian

Pia, 36, leadership position at TV, NRW

My child, 2.5 years old, and I have experienced the following at the District Court and Youth Welfare Office in Leverkusen:

- Downplaying of stalking, death threats, choking, all in front of the child
- Promotion of post-separation violence, forcing contact with the perpetrator, expansion of visitation, we are isolated by the family in Berlin, waves of lawsuits
- Disregard for the child's welfare
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention

Sarra, 40, entrepreneur and artist, Berlin

My child and I experienced the following at the Kreuzberg District Court, Berlin:

- Pediatrician evaluates the mother outside their expertise on behalf of the youth welfare office – the district court accepts it.
- Adjustment of the family file in favor of the father
- Ignoring physical and sexual abuse inflicted on the child
- Ignoring domestic violence, stalking, and trespassing
- Ignoring the father's diagnoses related to mental health issues
- Forced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the child's welfare
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Unaddressed complaints to the supervisory authority, letters to the senator and members of the Bundestag
- Receiving protection from violence abroad, which was denied in Germany.

Manuela, 45 years old, employee, Bavaria

My two children and I as their mother have had to experience the following at the District Court of Landshut (with various family judges) and with the Youth Welfare Office of the Landshut district (various employees), as well as with the actually appointed legal guardians for my children, since 2020—and unfortunately, we are still experiencing these in 2026 without any change:

- institutional violence
- trivialization of domestic/psychological violence/post-separation violence
- promotion of post-separation violence
- permanent disregard of the child's welfare as well as permanent disregard of the expressed will of the child.

Laura, 40 years old, social worker, Bavaria

My children and I have experienced institutional violence at the Higher Regional Court of Munich. Disregard of the Istanbul Convention despite very high risk of intimacy due to the GaTe-Rai risk analysis, enforcement of contact despite lack of insight into the offense, and disclosure of our protected address.

Jessica, 37, Project Manager, Lower Saxony

My children and I had to experience the following at the Youth Welfare Office in Wolfenbüttel:

- Downplaying of domestic and psychological violence
- Ignoring and encouraging post-separation violence

Mara, 37, Clerk, Crailsheim, Baden-Württemberg

My child and I experienced the following at the District Court of Schwäbisch Hall and the District Court of Crailsheim:

- Downplaying of threats
- Encouragement of post-separation violence through perpetrator contact, not taking the dangerous situation seriously (lies were believed or not handled appropriately despite being disproven)

- Disregard of the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the child's well-being
- Disregard and ignorance of the child's reactions

Janine, 45, psychologist, Berlin

My child and I had to experience the following at the Tempelhof District Court and especially at the Friedrichshain Youth Welfare Office:

- Downplaying of domestic violence
- Victim-blaming / reversal of perpetrator and victim ('Mom is lying about violence to take the child from Dad')
- Promotion of post-separation violence through a forced alternating custody arrangement for a one-year-old
- Disregard for the child's welfare (the child also experienced domestic violence later, which was dismissed as the mother's influence)
- Use of mother- and child-negative narratives (attachment intolerance, manipulation, maternal gatekeeping, over-attachment, parentification, etc.)

Karla, 37, hairdresser, NRW

My children and I experienced the following at the Siegen District Court:

- Downplaying & ignorance of domestic violence and stalking, as well as approaching bans
- Promotion of post-separation violence through forced contact with the perpetrator, which led to renewed violence in front of the child
- Disregard of the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the child's well-being

Melli, 47 years old, IT management assistant, Neunkirchen/Saar, Saarland

Children 4 and 10 years old, according to the Neunkirchen district court, despite violence, both psychological and physical, are supposed to be reunited with the father for visitation.

- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Institutional violence for over 5 years
- Victim-blaming
- Disregard for the child's well-being
- Ignoring domestic violence against the children, evidence exists, but nobody cares
- Forced victim-offender contact
- Mother is being criminalized

Alina, 41 years old, household helper from Salzgitter, Lower Saxony

My child and I experienced the following at the Wolfenbüttel District Court:

- Downplaying of psychological abuse
- Victim-blaming
- Promotion of post-separation violence through forced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the child's welfare
- Transfer of custody rights to the perpetrator

Result: No possibility to return to my home country with my daughter and live there safely

Katrin, 41, PR manager, Berlin

My child and I experienced the following at the Berlin-Pankow District Court:

- Institutional violence (repeated threats of child removal)
- Downplaying of drug use (THC and cocaine)
- Promotion of post-separation violence
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention

- Disregard for the child's welfare and wishes

Vera, 44 years old, doctor, Saxony-Anhalt

My child and I had to experience the following at the Bernburg District Court/Naumburg Higher Regional Court:

- Massive institutional violence
- Downplaying of sexual/psychological violence/post-separation violence
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the child's welfare

Julia, 38 years old, employee, Hamburg

My child and I had to experience the following at the Hamburg District Court and Hamburg-Nord Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Downplaying of domestic and psychological violence and post-separation violence
- The promotion of post-separation violence by forced access of the perpetrator to their victims
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the child's welfare

Regina, 44, economist, Hesse

My child and I had to experience the following at the district court in Hesse, through the Frankfurt Youth Welfare Office, and the court-appointed guardian:

- institutional violence
- trivialization of domestic and psychological violence/post-separation violence
- disregard of threats of physical violence
- disregard of actual violence carried out and documented by the police
- disregard of violence against the child
- promotion of post-separation violence through forced access of the perpetrator to his victims
- disregard of the Istanbul Convention
- disregard of the child's welfare

Sina, 44, caseworker, NRW

My child and I experienced the following at the Wipperfürth district court:

- trivialization of psychological violence/post-separation violence
- institutional violence
- disregard of the child's welfare

Nina, 38, bank clerk, Rhineland-Palatinate

My children and I have had to experience the following at the Koblenz and Andernach District Courts as well as at the Koblenz and Andernach Youth Welfare Offices:

- institutional violence
- trivialization of domestic and psychological violence as well as post-separation violence
- promotion of post-separation violence through forced access of the perpetrator to his victims
- disregard of the Istanbul Convention
- disregard of the child's welfare

Kirsten, 36, nurse, NRW

My child and I have experienced the following at the Dortmund Family Court:

- disregard of the child's welfare
- institutional violence
- trivialization of psychological violence/post-separation violence
- promotion of post-separation violence, stalking

- disregard of the Istanbul Convention

Steffi, 52 years old, Bavaria

My son and I have experienced institutional violence at the Munich Higher Regional Court. Disregard of the Istanbul Convention, 3 protection orders in 6 years, leaving the relationship in 2021 through a witness protection program, psychiatric assessments of both parents exist. The father is paranoid, antisocial, and not capable of parenting; the first court's restriction of contact was lifted, and attempts were made under pressure and temporary orders to enforce contact with our almost 13-year-old. In 6 years, there was almost no half-year without court proceedings, hearings, or assessments.

The contact protocols of the current contact supervisor were withheld from the fourth expert. She was appointed as the contact expert. A solid basis for an assessment is lacking if the protocols are not passed on by the senate of the Munich Higher Regional Court. Since a serious incident in 2022, my son refuses to have contact. His will has been repeatedly disregarded for years and up to today.

Svenja, 38 years old, HR manager from Schleswig-Holstein

At the Eckernförde district court, the judge in charge

- joked around with the child's father's criminal defense lawyer during the protection-from-violence proceedings
- didn't know about the violent incidents (including death threats)
- thought that sending the child's father away solved the problem
- she's divorced too, even has 3 kids, and we mothers just have to trust fathers more (my daughter, 2, had already been exposed to violence from her father and had to watch me being physically and, to this day, psychologically abused)
- after the hearing, there was an attempted murder and stalking; the perpetrator (father) moved to a place just 30 meters away from us

Luisa, 37, journalist, Schleswig-Holstein

In the custody proceedings for my three children (3, 5, 8) after nine years of domestic sexualized violence, I experienced the following at the Kiel District Court:

- the Istanbul Convention was not taken into account
- the risk to the children's welfare was not taken into account

Nadja, 45, employee, Lower Saxony

My children and I have experienced the following in family court and youth welfare contexts in Lower Saxony:

- downplaying of psychological violence and post-separation violence
- pressure regarding visitation and contact despite obvious stress on the children
- insufficient consideration of documented risks relevant to the children's welfare, including indications of addiction issues in the father's environment
- institutional support of stressful dynamics
- disregard for the children's welfare

Rabea, 36, social worker, Lower Saxony

My children and I had to experience the following at the District Court of Seesen:

- institutional violence
- trivialization of sexualized violence
- promotion of post-separation violence through forced access of the perpetrator to the victims
- disregard of the Istanbul Convention
- disregard of the child's welfare

Jenny, 43, business psychologist, Rhineland-Palatinate

My two children and I had to experience the following at the District Court of Neustadt/Weinstr. and at the Youth Welfare Office Neustadt/Weinstr.:

1. Institutional violence is evident in the forced supervised visitation that both children refused due to fleeing.
2. Domestic violence and alcohol abuse are downplayed, while psychological post-separation violence is dismissed as 'the past.'
3. Instead of considering the best interests of the child, the children's resistance is pathologized – in contradiction to the Istanbul Convention. Pathologizing the mother as 'attachment intolerant' while simultaneously ignoring the child's wishes violates the child's welfare and contradicts the protection duties under the Istanbul Convention.

Isabel, 46, translator, Baden-Württemberg

My children and I experienced the following at the youth welfare offices in Heidenheim an der Brenz and Göppingen:

- arbitrary pseudo-diagnosis of attachment intolerance
- downplaying of injuries/scars of both children
- promotion of post-separation violence after the second premature birth
- disregard for the child's welfare by imposing the shared custody model even though the father repeatedly terminated mediations
- Access to files is denied, responsibilities unclear

Tina, 38, BKA employee, Hessen

At the District Court Wiesbaden and the Higher Regional Court Frankfurt, I experience:

- Arbitrary decisions
- Decisions about removal of parental rights that are unchecked
- 3 sexual abuses of my child, including by 1 caretaker, no one pays attention, no psychological help
- Disenfranchisement through the disappearance of the child under Section 234b of the Criminal Code
- Psychological and emotional abuse of my child and me by the Youth Welfare Office Wiesbaden

Christiane, 52, biologist, Berlin

My child and I had to go through the following at the District Court Berlin-Kreuzberg:

- Downplaying of psychological abuse
- Disregard for the child's welfare

Fiona, 33 years old, child daycare provider, Baden-Württemberg & Bavaria

My ex-husband threatened me, hit me, and threw objects in the presence of our 2-year-old son. A report (Bavaria) was dropped by the authorities. During the separation, he threatened to kill me if I called the police again. After the separation, he found out that I was considering moving and threatened me again. A report (Baden-Württemberg) was again dropped because he had never committed a crime before.

Since he constantly refuses to sign or forbids everyday things, I applied for sole custody. I have emails from him that disprove his lies in the proceedings, yet now an expert opinion is supposed to be prepared to examine his claims.

Doro, 35, tenured high school teacher, Thuringia

My child and I had to experience the following at the Weimar and Erfurt District Courts:

- Downplaying of domestic and psychological violence, downplaying of threats of child abduction as well as murder threats against the mother
- Disregard of evidence, including from a German embassy after an actual child abduction by the child's father over several weeks to Egypt (CF)

- Institutional violence including victim-blaming and gaslighting through the use of a psychological expert
 - Family psychology report does not hold up against method-critical reports regarding scientific approach including quality criteria, expert used without trauma knowledge, alienation arguments (PAS) used
 - Disregard of the Istanbul Convention
 - Disregard for the child's welfare, as visitation was forced again after the child refused contact with the custodial parent and the use of force as a measure was approved
- Note: Criminal trial still not opened three years after the child abduction (Erfurt Public Prosecutor's Office / Weimar District Court) --> no timely criminal/deterrent effect

Elli, 42, Accountant, Bavaria

My child and I experienced the following at the District Court of Erding and the Higher Regional Court of Munich:

- institutional violence
- downplaying of domestic violence
- promotion of post-separation violence through forced contact with the perpetrator; as a result, my child voluntarily went into care, wanting to be with me
- the perpetrator was granted custody and access to the child
- disregard of the Istanbul Convention
- disregard for the best interests of the child.

Lisa, Teacher, NRW

My child and I had to go through the following at the Wesel Youth Welfare Office:

- institutional violence through data protection violations, one-sided favoritism, and exclusion of me
- promotion of post-separation violence by cooperating only with the father and putting pressure on my child
- disregard for the best interests of the child and my parental rights.

Natti, 34, special needs educator, Baden-Württemberg

My children and I experienced the following at the Bad Säckingen District Court:

- Institutional violence
- Downplaying of domestic/psychological violence/violence after separation
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the child's welfare
- Promotion of post-separation violence through forced contact with the perpetrator

Ulrike, 54, graduate business economist, Baden-Württemberg

My children and I have had to endure institutional violence, disregard for the child's wishes, visitation despite protection against violence, and threats from the Bodenseekreis Youth Welfare Office (either visitation or custody). The Tettnang District Court is also involved: No child protection, but reversal of victim and perpetrator. My daughter's statements are ignored, as is the criminal case. For 4 years my daughter has suffered from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder – no therapy possible because the father still has custody despite everything.

Bianca, 37, housewife, Krefeld, NRW

My child and I experienced the following at the Krefeld District Court:

- Institutional violence
- Downplaying of death threats
- Encouraging post-separation violence through forced contact with the perpetrator
- Re-traumatization
- Disregard for the child's welfare

Emma, 51, Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA), Leipzig, Saxony

My child and I experienced the following at the Leipzig Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic and psychological violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the best interests of the child

Charlotte, 41, Civil Servant Teacher, Bavaria

My child and I experienced the following through the Miesbach Local Court, the Youth Welfare Office, and the court-appointed guardian ad litem:

- Severe institutional violence
- Threats that all parties involved in the proceedings knew each other well and coordinated their actions in advance
- Claims that the stalking and violence committed by the child's father were fabricated
- Threat of relocating the child to a completely unfamiliar father (allegation: unwillingness to bond)
- Imposition of a travel restriction and notification of the Federal Police because of my job offer in the public-interest school service abroad
- Threat to have my young child brought to the court-appointed expert by police force
- Disregard for the child's welfare
- Victim-blaming and reversal of victim and perpetrator roles

Helga, 46, Legal Assistant, Brandenburg

My children and I experienced institutional violence at the Zossen Local Court and the Teltow-Fläming Youth Welfare Office, as well as the trivialization of domestic, psychological, and sexualized violence and of rape.

We continue to suffer immense post-separation abuse, including stalking, endangerment in road traffic, defamation, slander, and threats directed at our entire family, circle of friends, and all supporters by the perpetrator/husband/father of the children.

In our case, the Istanbul Convention is being disregarded, and the welfare of the children is being seriously compromised.

Iris, 51, Special Education Teacher, Hesse

My two children and I experienced the following at the Frankfurt am Main/Höchst Local Court:

- Trivialization and disregard of violence in expert reports and court proceedings
- No interviews of the children regarding the violence they experienced
- Threat by the court to place my daughter (10) in a boarding school during the summer
- Compulsion to apply for educational support measures in the mother's household
- Insults and derogatory remarks directed at the mother in the courtroom
- Although an amicable visitation arrangement existed, the judge independently initiated custody proceedings
- The father's threat to my son (8), "I'm going to destroy your mother," received no consideration during the proceedings
- My son (8) continues to suffer pain during visitation weekends; the court is aware of the circumstances but ignores them

Juliane, 50, Industrial Management Assistant, Thuringia

My children and I experienced the following at the Erfurt Local Court and with the Erfurt Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of threats of violence and post-separation abuse; victim-perpetrator reversal

- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Selina, 40, Senior Executive, Bavaria

My child and I experienced the following at the Rosenheim Local Court:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of threats
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Coercion through state action
- Acceptance and prolongation of severe psychological distress suffered by the child despite warnings
- Disregard for or concealment of statements by neutral third parties (e.g., professional caregivers, kindergarten staff)
- Delays caused by granting deadlines to only one side
- Failure to consider documented symptoms of distress in the child
- Acceptance of developmental disadvantages
- Financial pressure caused by delays and erroneous decisions

Erika, 43, Police Officer, North Rhine-Westphalia

My children and I experienced institutional post-separation abuse before the Bergheim Local Court, the Düren Local Court, the Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf, and the Youth Welfare Offices of Elsdorf and Düren.

Domestic, sexualized, financial, and psychological violence were trivialized and disregarded. Two of my three children were never heard. We were forced into contact for three years and were repeatedly retraumatized.

In January, my youngest child was placed with the father against the child's will after the Düren Youth Welfare Office and the Düren Local Court engaged in victim-perpetrator reversal.

My children and I remain entirely unprotected from my ex-husband.

The Istanbul Convention was not considered in any of the proceedings.

Verena, 35, Geoinformatics Specialist, Baden-Württemberg

My children and I have experienced, and continue to experience, the following at the Local Court and Youth Welfare Office:

- Trivialization of domestic, psychological, financial, and post-separation violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through extensive enforced visitation with the perpetrator despite the children's clear fear responses
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through institutional pressure to attend joint counseling sessions with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Nora, 44, Equal Opportunities Officer, North Rhine-Westphalia

Experiences with the Velbert Local Court and the Heiligenhaus Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence: authorities imposed additional burdens on us.
- Trivialization of violence: domestic, sexualized, and psychological violence, especially post-separation abuse, was ignored.
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse: the perpetrator was granted enforced access to the child.

- Disregard for the welfare of the child and the Istanbul Convention: protective obligations were not implemented.

Alina, 43, Civil Service Administrator, Rhineland-Palatinate & Hesse

My children and I experienced the following before the Langen Local Court, the Ludwigshafen Local Court, and related proceedings:

- Failure to process or delaying urgent applications relevant to child welfare
- Inadequate examination of repeated reports of violence and risks made by the children
- Orders for visitation and overnight stays despite the children's fear, refusal, and severe behavioral problems
- Unprepared visitation with a father previously unknown to the child
- Mixing of proceedings despite different custody situations for the two children
- Statements by authorities lacking jurisdiction and direct knowledge of the case
- Lack of due process despite exhaustion of legal remedies
- Massive institutional pressure on me as the reporting mother instead of effective child protection

Betty, 33, Saarland

I experienced the following with the Neunkirchen/Saar Police:

- Trivialization of death threats
- Trivialization of domestic violence

Bea, 35, Consulting Employee, Bavaria

My children and I experienced the following at the Rosenheim Local/Family Court (through the guardian ad litem, court-appointed expert, and judge):

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic, sexualized, psychological, and post-separation violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse, for example through enforced access by the perpetrator to his victims
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Tessa, 27, Administrative Officer, Municipal Administration, Saxony

My child and I experienced the following at the Dresden Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic, sexualized, psychological, and post-separation violence
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Isa, 42, Flight Attendant, Hesse

I experienced the following at the Darmstadt Local Court:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic, sexualized, psychological, and post-separation violence, as well as home invasions
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse, for example through enforced access by the perpetrator to his victims
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention

In order to live safely and avoid further persecution by the perpetrator, I was forced to change my name and place of residence and to cut off contact with my parents, who continue to have contact with him. Therefore, no further details regarding locations can be provided, as the perpetrator also has connections to the institutions involved and the local police.

Jana, 50, Therapist, Berlin

My children and I experienced the following at the Kreuzberg Local Court and the Neukölln Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of allegations related to the production of child sexual abuse material
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator and imposed visitation and holiday arrangements used as instruments of control
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child, including the failure to conduct a child-endangerment assessment (currently the subject of an independent investigation concerning the Neukölln Youth Welfare Office)

Alicia, 51, Analyst, Hamburg

My two children and I experienced the following at the Hamburg-Barmbek Local Court:

- Expansion of visitation rights for the father during the first year after separation despite the children's explicit wishes to the contrary (three clear refusals)
- Obligation to attend a second parenting counseling program, again focused solely on resolving the father's everyday issues rather than the children's needs
- The father's application for sanctions was granted because the mother took a child to a doctor's appointment during the father's visitation time
- The mother was compelled to agree to limited tax-related income splitting after the divorce, resulting in uncertain tax liabilities for the previous three years so that the father could reduce his tax burden

Daniela, 35, Epidemiologist, Bavaria

My child and I experienced the following at the Rosenheim Family Court, the Rosenheim Youth Welfare Office, and the Rosenheim Child Protection Association:

- Judges ignored the Istanbul Convention despite evidence of intimate partner violence, sexualized violence, physical violence, psychological violence, and post-separation abuse
- Judges were unfamiliar with the Istanbul Convention and had to be informed about it by legal counsel
- The Youth Welfare Office considered violence irrelevant
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse and violence against the child by the guardian ad litem despite the father admitting violence against the mother
- Disregard for the child's wishes and welfare by the Child Protection Association, the Youth Welfare Office, the guardian ad litem, and legal representatives

Sabine, 46, Early Childhood Educator, Rhineland-Palatinate

My children and I experienced the following with the Mayen-Koblenz Youth Welfare Office:

- Although a court-issued protection order against the children's father was in place, I was still required to attend meetings at the Youth Welfare Office together with him
- Trivialization of threats and insults; the protection order was effectively ignored
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child (including before the Andernach Local Court)
- Consequence: my son was later physically assaulted

Desiree, 50, PhD Holder, Münster, North Rhine-Westphalia

My child and I experienced the following at the Münster Local Court and Youth Welfare Office:

- Trivialization of psychological and physical violence
- Trivialization of financial abuse
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse

- Coercive control
- *Violencia vicaria* (violence committed through a child to harm the other parent)
- Victim-perpetrator reversal
- Enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Natalie, 44, Public Administration Specialist, Thuringia

Since February 2020, my nine-year-old son and I have experienced the following at the Nordhausen Local Court, the Jena Higher Regional Court, and the Nordhausen Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic post-separation violence and facilitation of post-separation abuse, including enforced access by a potential perpetrator to the victim, even with police involvement and without a visitation order
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child, including suggestive questioning by judges and guardians ad litem and disregard for the child's statements regarding physical abuse, despite medical documentation
- Manipulation of expert assessments through false statements and lack of professional qualifications

Nelsa, 55, Journalist, Hamburg

My child and I experienced the following at the Hamburg-Eimsbüttel Youth Welfare Office and the Hamburg-Mitte Family Court:

- Facilitation of post-separation abuse, financial abuse, and institutional violence
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Trivialization of violence
- Unqualified staff and absence of trauma-informed experts
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Structural violence through a guardian ad litem who advocates for fathers' rights
- No accountability or review by authorities regarding failures to provide assistance

Stefanie, 43, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Pediatrician, and Expert Witness, Bavaria

My children and I experienced the following at the Regensburg Local Court:

- Trivialization of violence against my children and me
- Disregard for the welfare of the child despite warnings from the child's psychotherapist
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Trivialization of threats that the child could be raped and murdered
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse
- Similar trivialization of violence by the Regensburg District Youth Welfare Office

Ina, 41, Manager, Brandenburg

My children and I experienced the following at the Zossen Local Court:

- Trivialization of stalking and persecution by the perpetrator
- Disregard for sexualized violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through visitation arrangements and mandatory contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention through the minimization of psychological violence

Felicitas, 42, Employed Professional, Rhineland-Palatinate

At the Ludwigshafen Local Court and the Ludwigshafen Youth Welfare Office, repeated criminal complaints by the father that were demonstrably unfounded, as well as repeated allegations later

shown to be false and threats with potentially devastating consequences for my livelihood, were not considered risks.

The impact on my professional existence (which requires a clean criminal record certificate) was not taken into account.

The father made degrading statements to the Youth Welfare Office and the guardian ad litem that denied my role as a mother, without any response from those institutions.

The ongoing psychological abuse and post-separation dynamics were classified merely as a “high-conflict parental situation,” resulting in the absence of a specific risk assessment and insufficient protection of the child’s welfare.

Marion, 41, Political Scientist, Saxony-Anhalt

My child and I experienced the following at the Quedlinburg Local Court and the Naumburg Higher Regional Court:

- Disregard for the welfare of the child despite specific indications of sexualized violence
- Enforced unsupervised visitation with a parent who has been under criminal investigation for the sexual abuse of the child since October 2024
- Violation of Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention (priority of protection over visitation rights)
- Imposition of a fine on the mother for refusing unsupervised visitation in order to protect the child
- Delayed investigations and failure to secure digital evidence despite indications of child sexual abuse material
- The father continues to work as a teacher and remains in the classroom despite the ongoing investigation
- An expert report accused the mother of alienating the child from the father and recommended separating the child from her

Eva, 45, Sales Administrator (B.A. Business Administration), Baden-Württemberg

My four-year-old daughter and I experienced the following at the Besigheim Local Court and the Vaihingen an der Enz Youth Welfare Office:

- Trivialization of sexualized violence despite a PTSD diagnosis and specialist medical reports recommending against visitation and in favor of child protection
- Enforced contact with the father despite severe retraumatization caused by contact with the perpetrator, thereby facilitating post-separation abuse and disregarding the child’s welfare

Isabel, 41, Municipal Administration Employee, Baden-Württemberg

My child and I experienced the following at both the Rastatt Local Court and the Rastatt Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of violence (sexualized, psychological, physical, and post-separation violence)
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Natascha, 37, Early Childhood Educator, Braunschweig, Lower Saxony

My child and I experienced the following through employees of the Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic, sexualized, psychological, and post-separation violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse, for example through enforced access by the perpetrator to his victims
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Catrin, 45, Executive Assistant, Brandenburg

My child and I experienced the following at the Potsdam Local Court:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic and psychological violence and abuse of dependents
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator and the transfer of the child's primary residence to the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child and the child's expressed wishes

Anne, 45, Social Worker, Lower Saxony

My children and I experienced the following at the Hanover Local Court, the Hanover Youth Welfare Office, and through the guardian ad litem C. Kindervater:

- Institutional violence
- Victim-perpetrator reversal
- Reliance on PAS (Parental Alienation Syndrome) and "bonding intolerance" arguments by the guardian ad litem and the judge
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse and violence against my daughter through enforced contact with the father, who had severely abused her
- The guardian ad litem lied to the child and lied in court, without any consequences
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- The father admitted violence in court; nevertheless, it was argued that this could not explain why my daughter was so afraid of him. He (a teacher) claimed he had bitten her repeatedly until she bled for "educational reasons." The Youth Welfare Office adopted this interpretation and referred to it merely as "educational measures."

Mia, 33, Office Employee, Baden-Württemberg

My two-year-old daughter and I experienced at the Pforzheim Local Court and the Pforzheim Youth Welfare Office that visitation continued to be enforced despite existing indications of risk and clear signs of distress in the child.

I consider this a disregard for the child's welfare and a trivialization of post-separation abuse.

Irina, 42, Teacher, Hamburg

My child and I experienced the following at the Hamburg-Nord Youth Welfare Office, the Hamburg-Barmbek Local Court, and the Hamburg Higher Regional Court:

- Trivialization of domestic violence, including death threats
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Bianca, 44, Public Service Employee, Bavaria

My children and I experienced the following at the Kempten Local Court and the Kempten Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic and psychological violence
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Enforced contact with the children's father following domestic violence

Hannah, 39, Financial Administration Officer, North Rhine-Westphalia

My children and I experienced the following with both the Heinsberg District Youth Welfare Office and the Geilenkirchen Local Court:

- Institutional violence
- Disregard for sexualized violence and trivialization of emotional, physical, and post-separation violence against the children
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact between the perpetrator and the children despite the children's consistent wish to discontinue visitation
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Iris, 35, Employee, Berlin-Falkensee

I experienced the following at the Nauen Local Court and the Brandenburg Higher Regional Court:

- Institutional violence
- Financial abuse
- Violation of fundamental rights through forced additional work during pregnancy and two months after childbirth in order to cover child support obligations for a child living with the father

Julia, 39, Social Worker at a Youth Welfare Office, North Rhine-Westphalia

My five-year-old child and I experienced the following at the Düsseldorf Local Court:

- Institutional violence
- Violence and post-separation abuse
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Anna, 33, University Employee, Berlin

From August 2023 to September 2024, my child and I experienced the following at the Berlin-Kreuzberg Local Court and the Hellersdorf-Marzahn Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic violence in the presence of the child
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Cindy, 37, Physiotherapist, North Rhine-Westphalia

My son and I experienced the following at the Neuss Local Court and the Dormagen Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic and psychological violence, as well as post-separation abuse
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Vicky, 42, Teacher, Peine, Lower Saxony

My children and I experienced the following at the Peine Local Court, the Peine Youth Welfare Office, the Peine Family Counseling Service, and through guardian ad litem Mr. Storck:

- Institutional violence
- Protection of perpetrators instead of protection of victims
- Complete trivialization of violence against the mother and children (the father was able to admit the violence during counseling and at the Youth Welfare Office and was met with understanding)
- The Youth Welfare Office questioned the children about the violence in the perpetrator's presence, although they had previously asked to speak privately
- Guardian ad litem Mr. Storck refused to speak with me as the mother, despite this being part of his mandate
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

- Staff at the family counseling service stated: “Violence can happen,” and “You have no idea how many fathers hit their children; that’s normal after a separation.”

Marina, 39, Medical Assistant, Bavaria

My two children and I experienced the following at the Munich Local Court:

- Institutional violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Daria, Social Worker, Hessen

My children and I experienced the following at the Frankfurt-Höchst Local Court, the Frankfurt Higher Regional Court, and the Hofheim Youth Welfare Office:

- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through the removal of custody rights
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic, sexualized, and psychological violence

Ina, 33, Private University Employee, Berlin-Falkensee

My child and I experienced the following at the Nauen Local Court and the Nauen Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of the child’s reports of violence
- Facilitation of violence through enforced access by the perpetrator to his victims
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Disregard for the child’s right to a non-violent upbringing
- Disregard for the child’s expressed wishes

Heike, 48, Lecturer, Hessen

My children and I experienced the following at the Weilburg Local Court:

- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Trivialization of the incidents
- Failure to investigate the incidents (sexual and psychological violence as well as neglect of the duty of care were not believed and were not pursued further)
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Institutional violence

Luisa, 35, Writer, Schleswig-Holstein

My child and I have experienced the following at the Eckernförde Local Court and Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator (compulsory visitation)
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Trivialization of domestic, sexualized, psychological, and post-separation violence

Alina, 41, Hotel Professional, Brandenburg

My children and I experienced the following at the Fürstenwalde Local Court:

- Trivialization of death threats and sexualized and psychological violence

- Facilitation of post-separation abuse
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Carolyn, 38, Hotel Professional and Hotel Business Manager, Hesse

My children and I experienced the following at the Rüsselsheim Local Court, the Frankfurt am Main Higher Regional Court, and the Groß-Gerau Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic violence (including being forced out of the family home with the children), psychological violence, and post-separation abuse
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Ignoring the father's gambling addiction
- Ignoring four independent counter-expert reports
- Ignoring all evidence (audio recordings, video recordings, medical certificates, etc.)

Nathalie, 37, Business Administration Professional, Lower Saxony

My child and I experienced the following at the Neustadt am Rübenberge Local Court, the Neustadt am Rübenberge Youth Welfare Office, and the Celle Higher Regional Court:

- Institutional violence
- Ignoring and trivializing domestic and psychological violence, including post-separation abuse
- Facilitation of severe post-separation abuse
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Complete disregard for the welfare of the child

Lena, 41, Teacher, Bremen

My children and I experienced the following at the Emden Local Court and the Emden Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of physical violence
- Trivialization of psychological violence
- Trivialization of post-separation abuse
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Joline, 40, Recipient of Disability Benefits Due to Abuse in Marriage, Bavaria

My child and I experienced the following at the Dillingen Local Court (child abuse proceedings) and the Aichach-Friedberg Family Court/Local Court (visitation proceedings):

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of death threats
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Katrin, 44, Nurse and Early Childhood Educator, Brandenburg

My children and I experienced the following at the Brandenburg an der Havel Local Court, the Brandenburg an der Havel Higher Regional Court, the Brandenburg an der Havel Youth Welfare Office, and through the guardian ad litem:

1. Institutional violence
2. Trivialization of domestic, sexualized, psychological, and post-separation violence

3. Facilitation of post-separation abuse, particularly through unavoidable contact with the perpetrator following repeated violence against my son
4. Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
5. Disregard for the welfare of the child

Lisa, 38, Daily Living Support Worker, Lower Saxony

My three children and I experienced the following at the Springe Local Court and the Celle Higher Regional Court:

The statements made by the children's father were accepted despite indications of undue influence and loyalty conflicts. The children's statements were not adequately contextualized, my own statements were dismissed as not credible, and my criticism of institutional actions was used as evidence of alleged parental incompetence.

Contrary to the recommendation of the court-appointed expert, these dynamics resulted in the removal of custody rights and the placement of the children with their father in the first instance. Subsequently, the siblings were separated because the father was unwilling to take one of the children into his household.

To this day, patterns of violence and coercive influence have not been adequately recognized or addressed in either court proceedings or administrative processes.

Juliana, 48, Rhineland-Palatinate

My children and I experienced the following at the Koblenz Local Court:

- Disregard for existing protection orders against the children's father
- Disregard for both children's expressed wish to remain with their mother
- Disregard for the welfare of the child (order to return the children to the United States despite warnings from the Mainz Youth Welfare Office and specialist psychologists regarding severe psychological violence)
- Separation from their mother as primary attachment figure and assistance in enabling the father to obtain sole custody in the United States and initiate criminal proceedings against the mother there

Maria, 42, Nurse, Bavaria

My children (then aged 7 and 4) and I experienced the following:

- Institutional violence at the Erding Youth Welfare Office
- Institutional violence at the Erding Family Court
- Placement with a psychologically ill and violent father
- Severe traumatization of the children
- Return to my care following a forensic expert assessment

Elisabeth, 48, Human Resources Professional, Bavaria

My two daughters and I experienced the following at the Bayreuth Local Court:

- Ignoring the father's death threats against the children and me
- A child's statement regarding sexual violence was weighed against the father's denial; despite this, the criminal proceedings ended in acquittal, and no child welfare assessment was conducted in the family court proceedings
- Ignoring the wishes of both children
- Expansion of visitation rights against the wishes of the children, contrary to recommendations of the Youth Welfare Office, the guardian ad litem, and the supervised visitation specialist, who had identified boundary-violating behavior by the father
- Threats by the family court judge to impose fines or imprisonment if the children refused to visit their father
- Following the expansion of visitation against the children's wishes, one child developed symptoms, including self-harming behavior, temporally linked to the expanded visitation.

The father refused therapy, and subsequently the family court judge also denied therapeutic support for the affected child

Lina, 48, Graduate Pedagogue, Hamburg

My child and I experienced the following at the Hamburg-Altona Local Court:

- Institutional violence / miscarriage of justice
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator

Erika, 75, Retired Senior Ministerial Official, Attorney-at-Law, Berlin

As a grandmother, together with my minor granddaughter and my daughter as the child's mother, we suffered the following prosecutorial and judicial injustices through the Bavarian justice system (Family Court, Public Prosecutor's Office, Nuremberg Higher Regional Court, Bavarian Supreme Regional Court):

- Dismissal of the mother's emergency applications to suspend visitation and grant her sole authority over healthcare decisions despite ongoing criminal investigations against the father for aggravated child sexual abuse
- Ineffective criminal investigations against the father without seizure of data storage devices, followed by discontinuation of proceedings due to alleged insufficient suspicion
- One year of criminal investigations against the mother and grandmother without concrete investigative measures; storage of their personal data in central prosecutorial records
- Judicial allegations of "abusive criminal complaints," "influencing the daughter against the father," "defamation of the father," and "vexatious litigation"
- Treatment of the grandmother in cost proceedings as though she were a convicted criminal offender

Current status: In March 2026, a joint individual application against Germany was filed before the European Court of Human Rights pursuant to Article 38 ECHR. In April 2026, a constitutional complaint was filed regarding the degrading treatment of the grandmother as a convicted offender, alleging institutional discrimination under Article 3 of the German Basic Law in conjunction with the Istanbul Convention.

Rebecka, 33, Occupational Therapist, Saxony

My child and I experienced the following at the Leipzig Local Court:

- Institutional violence (the guardian ad litem stated: "I always try to achieve a shared custody / alternating residence model"), despite an established primary residence model for five years.

Kathrin, 35, Nurse, Bavaria

My children and I experienced the following at the Kaufbeuren Local Court:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of sexualized violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Threat of losing custody rights
- Victim-perpetrator reversal

Claudia, 44, Physician, Berlin

My children and I experienced the following at the Pankow Local Court (Family Court), through the assigned guardian ad litem, and through the Berlin-Reinickendorf Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic and psychological violence

- Disregard of indications of sexual abuse
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact
- Disregard for the child's wishes
- Disregard for the welfare of the child, including endangerment of the child's welfare

Saskia, 36, Project Manager, Baden-Württemberg

My child and I experienced the following at the Local Court and the Esslingen psychological family counseling services:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of psychological violence and post-separation abuse
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Cornelia, 49, Hotel Professional, Heidenau, Saxony

My child and I experienced the following at the Pirna Local Court and the Pirna Youth Welfare Office:

- Trivialization of domestic, sexualized, psychological, and post-separation violence
- Trivialization of and doubts about death threats, although these had been documented and confirmed in writing by third parties (medical, educational, and pastoral staff at a clinic)
- Humiliating conduct by a Youth Welfare Office employee in the presence of my ex-husband
- Refusal of explicitly promised support from the Youth Welfare Office during court proceedings
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced access by the perpetrator to his victims
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child

Paddy, 50, Educational Professional, Baden-Württemberg

My child and I experienced the following through the Counseling Department of the Stuttgart Youth Welfare Office and at the Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt Local Court:

- Institutional violence
- Psychologically abusive conduct toward my child and me that had been proven in criminal proceedings was completely ignored by both institutions
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child, including the child's health and well-being

Nadja, 55, Account Manager, Nuremberg, Bavaria

My child and I experienced the following at the Nuremberg Local Court and the Nuremberg Youth Welfare Office:

- Facilitation and support of post-separation abuse
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Ignoring or trivializing insults made on Youth Welfare Office premises
- Traumatization through the family law system

Alexandra, 41, Nurse, Mother of Three, Thuringia

My children and I experienced the following at the Bad Salzungen Youth Welfare Office, the Meiningen Public Prosecutor's Office, and the Bad Salzungen Local Court:

- Trivialization of domestic, physical, and psychological violence, as well as severe and ongoing post-separation abuse, with statements such as: "But he is still your father; if you continue refusing visitation, I will have to advise dad to consult a lawyer."

- Disregard for the welfare of the child; after we spoke openly about the violence, we became the problem. Instead of receiving urgent protection and support, we experienced additional institutional violence that makes it difficult not to fall silent again.
- We continue to be stalked, blackmailed, threatened, and harassed by the perpetrator. We live below the poverty line and in constant fear, even three years after the separation. Our complaints were dismissed, and we were subjected to exhausting and lengthy child support proceedings.

Mareike, 42, Baden-Württemberg

My daughter and I experienced the following through the Esslingen am Neckar Youth Welfare Office: The father of my two-year-old daughter Clara intentionally struck me in the face twice with full force. Afterwards, he called the police, and since then the police, Youth Welfare Office, and his lawyer have relied solely on his account of events.

My daughter repeatedly and clearly expressed that she wanted to be with me, but the Youth Welfare Office relied on my husband's claims that I posed a danger to him and the children. As a result, I am only allowed to see Clara during supervised visitation.

Without reflection or justification, the Youth Welfare Office stated that I was psychologically incapable of caring for Clara—a completely false assessment and a serious endangerment of the child's welfare through the restriction of contact with her mother.

Nancy, Mother of Two, Hotel Manager, Bavaria

My children and I experienced the following at the Erding Local Court:

- Failure to believe reports of domestic violence and rape
- Trivialization of psychological violence
- Victim-perpetrator reversal
- Compulsory visitation; the children became ill
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through disregard of the perpetrator's actions
- Ignoring my reports and complaints while accepting his numerous allegations
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the welfare of the child
- Result: For two and a half years we have endured daily harassment through stalking, countless complaints filed against me, and smear campaigns within my social environment. The perpetrator has not been stopped because the situation is not taken seriously.
- My children and I are actively being denied protection.

Meike, 39, Board Member, Hesse

My children and I experienced the following at the Darmstadt Family Court and the Groß-Gerau Youth Welfare Office:

- Trivialization of domestic, psychological, and physical violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced access of the perpetrator to the victim (contact arrangements)
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention

Arnela, 43, Bavaria

My children and I experienced the following at the Nuremberg Family Court:

- Institutional violence; Section 1666 proceedings were disregarded and child protection measures proposed by the Youth Welfare Office were not reviewed.
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention.
- Continuity of an ASD diagnosis was ignored and unsupported hypotheses were reinforced.
- Sole custody granted to a violent father.
- Professional assessments and rulings of the Higher Regional Court of Nuremberg were disregarded.

Janine, 43, Teacher, Bavaria

My children and I experienced the following at the Munich Family Court (Judge Hartl), the Munich Mitte Youth Welfare Office, and the Munich I Public Prosecutor's Office:

- Institutional violence: Despite documented physical, psychological, and verbal violence committed in front of my children (ages 5 and 10), I was forced into a nesting arrangement and threatened with loss of custody and a 50/50 custody model (by the guardian ad litem and the Youth Welfare Office).
- Trivialization of violence: Death threats were not taken seriously, and my application for protection from violence was ignored. I was treated as though I were the accused.
- Disregard for child welfare and the Istanbul Convention: Evidence of violence was not reviewed, the children were not heard, and instead were subjected to suggestive questioning by the guardian ad litem. No child welfare assessment was conducted. The Youth Welfare Office recommended that I seek therapy instead of protection.
- Public Prosecutor's Office: My complaint and the perpetrator's counter-complaint were treated equally, and despite exculpatory evidence, the case was dismissed under Section 153 of the German Code of Criminal Procedure.

Lisa, 32, Master Plasterer, Baden-Württemberg

My children and I experienced the following at the Tübingen Family Court:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic, sexualized, psychological, and post-separation violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse, for example through enforced access of the perpetrator to their victims
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the best interests of the child

Dominique, 33, Mother, Hamburg

My daughter was removed from our family by the Hamburg Youth Welfare Office and Family Court on the basis of an unsubstantiated international risk assumption (there was no Interpol notice or arrest warrant), accompanied by severe stigmatization and escalating interventions.

Despite documented contradictions in official statements and case files, these interventions continue to this day without genuine clarification or reassessment.

- Institutional violence
- Disregard for the best interests of the child
- Structural institutional failure through the continuation of flawed measures

Stephanie, 44, Secondary School Teacher, Konstanz, Baden-Württemberg

My children and I experienced the following at the Konstanz Family Court:

- Hostility toward women and mothers by the judge, Youth Welfare Office, and guardian ad litem
- False statements by the guardian ad litem in order to place the children with their father
- Use of pseudoscientific theories in assessing the situation
- Disregard for the best interests of the child
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse

Sandra, 45, Environmental Scientist, Bavaria

My child and I experienced the following at the Erlangen Family Court:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of stalking and physical violence
- Conversion of my protection-from-violence hearing (which was never actually heard) into a visitation proceeding
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator

- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the best interests of the child
- Preparation of expert reports concerning so-called “Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS)”

Carolyn, 43, Architect, Saxony

My child and I experienced the following at the Freiberg Family Court, the Freiberg and Dresden Youth Welfare Offices, and the Dresden Higher Regional Court:

- Post-separation abuse by the child’s father
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Dismissal of criminal proceedings following my report of physical assault by the child’s father in the presence of the child (Chemnitz Public Prosecutor’s Office)
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Institutional violence, including:
 - The father’s fictitious residence was known and tolerated by the Youth Welfare Office, guardian ad litem, expert witnesses, and judges. Everyone knew about it, yet no one wanted to see or hear the evidence.
 - A criminal complaint regarding the father’s false sworn testimony was dismissed. The judge in Freiberg described the father’s conduct as “self-defense.”
 - This ultimately led to the child being transferred to the father, where the child continues to live today.
- Disregard for the child’s welfare and the child’s wishes

Karoline, 45, Businesswoman, Brandenburg

My children and I experienced the following at the Prenzlau Family Court and Youth Welfare Office (Uckermark) and the Brandenburg Higher Regional Court:

- Institutional violence and disregard for the best interests of the child
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Trivialization and minimization of domestic, sexualized, and psychological violence committed by the children’s father
- Trivialization of death threats and highly conflictual custody exchanges
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse, for example through recommendations for a weekly alternating residence model, subsequent transfer of sole custody to the father, shifting responsibility onto the children, lack of psychological support for my children, victim-blaming, and failure to provide protection from violence

Desiree, 43, Physician, Bavaria

My child and I have been experiencing the following before the Munich Family Court for the past six years:

- Systematic abuse of legal procedures through years of repetitive and abusive applications filed by the child’s father
- Misleading the Youth Welfare Office and the court through demonstrably false representations
- Court-imposed sanctions against me (a 100-meter restraining order of indefinite duration) despite the absence of any actual risk situation, as well as one-sided infringements of my fundamental rights, including a prohibition on accompanying my child to the front door of my own home
- Shifting of responsibility and lack of accountability among those involved in the proceedings
- Artificial prolongation of proceedings accompanied by financial interests of the parties involved
- Structural failure to protect both child and mother

Maria, 38, Physiotherapist, Berlin

I experienced institutional violence at the Tiergarten District Court (Kirchstraße) in Berlin.

Ingrid, 58, Baden-Württemberg

My children and I experienced the following at the Ulm Family Court:

The trivialization of domestic and sexualized violence before separation, and the indirect support of psychological violence after separation by the Youth Welfare Office and Judge Rackl of the Ulm Family Court.

Lorena, 38, Social Worker, Rhineland-Palatinate

My six-year-old son, who was suspected of being autistic (diagnostic appointments had been arranged by me), was placed outside the family solely on the grounds of an alleged “parental conflict,” without the implementation of the diagnostic assessments, educational support, or concrete assistance measures cited as justification.

The placement nevertheless continues, although neither progress is evident nor the original objectives have been achieved. As a result, a severe interference with parental rights is being maintained without a sustainable basis.

Carolyn, 36, Lawyer, Hamburg

My daughter and my granddaughter Josi, then five years old and a preschool child in Hamburg, experienced the following at the Hamburg-Mitte District Court (Sievekingplatz) during Hague Convention proceedings in September 2023:

- Coordination between the attorneys involved, initiated by the child’s court-appointed representative, resulting in a court settlement requiring mother and child to return to Vancouver, Canada, despite Carolyn’s fear and distress
- Trivialization of psychological and post-separation abuse, as well as deprivation of property by the father
- False testimony by the Youth Welfare Office before the court
- Lies and criminal conduct by the Canadian father were not questioned by the court

Both mother and child died in August 2024 in Vancouver, isolated, destitute, defamed, and criminalized by the father.

Ruth, 46, Teacher, Hesse

My child and I experienced the following at the Fulda Family Court:

Disregard for the best interests of the child

My daughter, almost twelve years old, broke off contact with her father two years ago for understandable reasons. He then attempted to force contact over Christmas, saying: “Either you agree within 24 hours or I’ll go to court.”

My daughter still did not want contact. He went to court.

My daughter provided her lawyer with five specific requests (for example: “I do not want to stay with my father for more than five consecutive days”). Nevertheless, the court ordered almost three weeks with him during the summer holidays.

I was left completely speechless and had to tell my then nine-year-old daughter:

“I know you want me to help you. I have to be honest—I can no longer help you.”

I have been suffering from depression continuously for the past six months.

I am now threatened with a fine of €25,000 or imprisonment if I do not bring her to the visits—regardless of whether she wants to go.

My daughter has learned: “It does not matter whether I speak up. No one listens to me anyway.”

Melanie, 41, Physician

My children and I experienced the following at the Tostedt Family Court, the Celle Higher Regional Court, and the Buchholz Youth Welfare Office in the Nordheide region:

The separation from the children's father followed severe emotional, physical, sexualized violence and coercive control.

Despite an application for protection from violence, a criminal conviction of the father, and later statements by the children (then aged nine and ten) that they themselves had experienced violence and were extremely afraid of him, they were placed with him by court order.

For nearly a decade, we have been exposed to him without protection.

Liz, 40, Educator, North Rhine-Westphalia

My child and I experienced the following at the Rheinbach Family Court and Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of sexualized and psychological violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the best interests of the child

Julia, 35, Early Childhood Educator, Saarland

In the context of my relationship and separation, I experienced violence, including sexualized violence. What followed felt like a second form of violence—carried out through institutions such as the Saarlouis District Court, the Saarlouis Youth Welfare Office, the counseling center of the Diocese of Trier in Saarlouis, and the court-appointed guardian ad litem.

Instead of protection, I experienced my reports of violence being minimized, questioned, and inadequately assessed. The protective principles of the Istanbul Convention were not considered in any way. To this day, I have not received protection from the perpetrator.

During the proceedings, I interacted with various actors, including a guardian ad litem (Diane Kipper, who has connections to ISUV) and judges (including Oleownik and Matthis). I mention them because they were part of the structural processes in which I found myself—and still find myself.

Within these contexts, I encountered statements and assessments that gave me the impression that allegations of violence were generally treated with skepticism. It was explicitly conveyed that women supposedly invent allegations of violence in order to alienate children from their fathers.

Instead of focusing on protection, my behavior and trauma were scrutinized—particularly under the concept of “attachment tolerance.” I was led to believe that this could be classified as a risk to the child's welfare, potentially resulting in consequences up to and including the removal of my child from my care.

I come from Saarland and would like to emphasize that the situation here has a particular dynamic: due to the small size of the region and the close interconnections between people, many affected women are afraid to speak openly about their experiences. While people in other federal states joke that “everyone in Saarland is related,” many women here genuinely fear being recognized or suffering negative consequences. One thing is true: either everyone knows everyone else, or everyone knows someone connected to our perpetrators or the professionals involved in our cases. I, too, want to emphasize that I am very afraid. Afraid of my perpetrator. Afraid of the justice system. Afraid that speaking out in this message could have negative consequences for me.

And yet I am writing this—not only for myself, but also on behalf of the voices that remain silent out of fear.

Kristin, 38, Managing Director, Thuringia

My children and I experienced the following at the Apolda Family Court and the Weimarer Land Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic violence, although the children's father admitted to physically assaulting the children
- Post-separation abuse

- Facilitation of post-separation abuse, for example through the enforcement of contact arrangements
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the best interests of the child and the child's expressed wishes

Sara, 38, Social Pedagogue, Bremen

During my pregnancy, I experienced aggression, including my cat being choked and beaten, and being forced to exercise with dumbbells during a high-risk pregnancy.

During the postpartum period, there was heavy cannabis use, objects were thrown at me for not tidying up, and there was extreme impulsivity.

When I contacted the Youth Welfare Office, I was told:

"We don't want to open a can of worms. Move away as quickly as possible."

After we moved into separate homes, there continued to be controlling behavior, power dynamics, high impulsivity, and physical boundary violations toward our child (including pushing).

The Youth Welfare Office and family support services framed everything as a relationship issue between the parents.

One family support worker stated:

"He is not violent toward the child, and that is what matters."

During child handovers, there were repeated incidents of aggressive and impulsive behavior. The Youth Welfare Office suggested that I should simply call the police whenever this happened.

The guardian ad litem commented that he simply did not always realize how intimidating he came across.

I was told that I was unable to de-escalate situations effectively.

For two years, my child exhibited behavioral problems (until we moved away). I was told that this was solely because I was transferring stress onto the child.

The child's attachment to the father was repeatedly emphasized.

A judge literally stated that she was not interested when my lawyer attempted to describe the father's behavior.

We were told:

"You are parents. You need to learn how to communicate."

Jenny, 34, Saxony

For more than six years, my children (aged nine and five) and I have experienced psychological terror through post-separation abuse by my ex-husband as well as institutional violence.

- The Chemnitz Youth Welfare Office, several judges at the Chemnitz Family Court and the Dresden Higher Regional Court, as well as guardians ad litem Stelz and Schneider omitted agreed facts from court statements and written decisions or rewrote them entirely.
- Threats of reprisals, including loss of custody and financial penalties.
- Reports of child endangerment that I submitted against the father were repeatedly not accepted by the Youth Welfare Office.
- Parenting counselors and supervised visitation services consistently claimed they were "not responsible" rather than speaking briefly with the father, while simultaneously demanding ever more from me.

Judith, 45, Educator, Bavaria

My daughter and I experienced the following through the Tirschenreuth Youth Welfare Office, the Tirschenreuth Family Court, and the Nuremberg Higher Regional Court:

- Institutional violence
- Victim-blaming after reporting psychological abuse by the child's father
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention and lack of neutrality
- Disregard for and devaluation of the child's wishes
- Unlawful emergency removal of the child without an acute risk situation

- Destabilization and alienation of my daughter from me
- Informal coordination between the Youth Welfare Office and the court, bypassing legal procedures
- Ignoring my motions and factual submissions as a mother
- Forced contact with the abusive father
- Threats of custody removal despite an existing situation involving violence

Aline, 39, Physician, Baden-Württemberg

My children and I are currently experiencing the following at the Singen Family Court and the Singen Youth Welfare Office:

- Denial of physical, sexualized, and psychological violence, as well as post-separation abuse
- Deliberate facilitation of re-traumatization through enforced access of the perpetrator to the victims
- Disregard for the children's freely expressed wishes
- Disregard for the human right to psychological and physical health
- Circumvention of case-specific regulations exclusively in favor of the perpetrator

Larissa, 41, Author, Berlin

My child and I experienced the following at the Berlin Court of Appeal (3rd Senate):

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of defamation and slander; medical reports regarding violence against the mother and the child's health condition were not properly considered
- Acceptance of unqualified claims made by the guardian ad litem and the father without verification, despite far-reaching consequences
- Harm to the child's health and refusal of therapeutic support
- Use of Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS) as a narrative and argument, and the use of the concept of "attachment intolerance" to justify an emergency transfer of the child
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the best interests of the child

Manuela, 53, Florist, Baden-Württemberg

My child and I experienced the following at the Baden-Baden Family Court and currently at the Karlsruhe-Durlach Family Court:

- Victim-blaming
- Impairment of the child's individual best interests
- Disregard for sexual violence
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Presentation of false facts and non-scientific theories through an expert report
- Removal of custody rights and placement of the child with the perpetrator

Julia, 44, Teacher, North Rhine-Westphalia

My child and I experienced the following at the Cologne Family Court and the Cologne Higher Regional Court:

- Trivialization of psychological violence committed by the child's father
- Forced visitation with overnight stays despite the father's unlawful retention of the child
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the best interests of the child

Michaela, 43, Publicist, Bavaria

My child and I experienced the following at the Munich Family Court:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of domestic and psychological violence and post-separation abuse
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced access of the perpetrator to the victims
- Disregard for the best interests of the child

Daniela, 40, Employee, Bavaria

Like so many others, I have experienced the following through authorities in Landsberg am Lech:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of violence
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through enforced contact with the perpetrator
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the best interests of the child

Anna, 36, Psychologist, Mainz

My child and I experienced the following at the Family Court and the Youth Welfare Office in Mainz:

- Trivialization of domestic violence and sexual abuse
- Distortion and manipulation of expert reports, as well as pathologizing my statements and experiences with the child's father
- Complete transfer of residence rights and parental custody to the perpetrator
- Removal of my child and placement with the child's father

Monica, 42, Foreign Language Correspondent, Berlin

My children and I experienced the following at the Berlin-Köpenick Family Court:

- Institutional violence
- Trivialization of psychological violence and post-separation abuse
- Facilitation of post-separation abuse through the imposition of a shared residence arrangement and the recommendation of family therapy
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the best interests of the child

Thea, 35, Civil Servant, Rhineland-Palatinate

My child and I experienced the following at the Hermeskeil Family Court and the Trier Youth Welfare Office:

- Trivialization of sexualized violence against me
- Trivialization of domestic and psychological violence, particularly post-separation abuse, directed at both of us
- Institutional violence
- Disregard for the best interests of the child

Maria, 43, Academic, Baden-Württemberg

My child and I experienced the following at the Heidelberg Family Court and the Heidelberg Municipal Youth Welfare Office:

- Institutional violence
- Disregard for the Istanbul Convention
- Disregard for the best interests of the child

III. Letters from 24 children to the Federal Minister of Justice

Noah, 9, Lörrach (Baden-Württemberg)

Dear Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

I wish that:

- I had been taken seriously and believed when I spoke about violence against me / my mother / my siblings.
- I had not been forced to see my father or live with my father.
- I had not been repeatedly questioned in order to justify my negative feelings towards my father.
- My mother had been able to be fully there for me, instead of having to focus on protecting me.
- I had not been made to feel small and weak.
- My mother could have comforted me without having to worry about saying something “wrong” about the father.

Mats, 9, Bietigheim-Bissingen (Stuttgart region, Baden-Württemberg)

Dear Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

I wish that I could live with my mother.

I wish I had been believed when I spoke about violence from my father towards me.

And that the judge had not sent me back to my father.

I want to live with my mother again.

Mats

Jesko, 5, Berlin

Dear Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

I wish that I am always allowed to say no when I do not want to be alone with an adult—whether a music teacher, a parent of a kindergarten friend, or my father.

Why is this not the same everywhere?

Valentina, 6, Baden-Württemberg

I wish that I could go back to my mother and not spend so much time with my father.

I wish I had not had a guardian ad litem, because he scared me and forced me to talk.

Fiona, 14, Berlin

Dear Federal Minister of Justice,

I wish that our case had been thoroughly reviewed before it reached court, as all parties knew that my father’s demands would not succeed.

Instead, when I was 10 years old, I was questioned for two hours by a guardian ad litem who tried to influence me and turn me against my mother.

I was also expected to attend the court hearing, which my mother thankfully prevented.

I wish children were not involved when guardians ad litem have already conducted interviews.

Anna (14) and Niklas (18), NRW

We wish that the youth welfare office, judges, and guardians ad litem had spoken with us before our younger sister was placed with the man we are afraid of, and that they had prevented him from coming near us.

We do not want to see this man and cannot bear the stories our sister tells.

Lara and Elias, 8 and 6, Bavaria

We wish that:

- the guardian ad litem had told the truth and acted in our best interest instead of the father's interest
- we had not been forced to see our father or spend so much time with him

Jonas, 6, Regensburg (Bavaria)

Hello Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

My father is a police officer. My mother fled with us to a women's shelter because she was very afraid.

Our father found us there. There were no consequences.

We did not want visitation or to stay overnight with him, but we still have to.

I wish that I, my siblings, the therapists, witnesses, and my mother had been taken seriously.

I do not understand why none of this is considered.

I wish that protection rules were followed and that my mother did not have to live in constant fear of death.

I wish that visits were non-violent and that psychological and financial violence were taken seriously.

I am afraid and feel unheard. Please help ensure children like me are protected.

Finja, 5 (with Lea, 3, and Noah, 1), Regensburg (Bavaria)

Hello Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

My father is a police officer. My mother fled with us to a women's shelter because she was very afraid.

Our father found us there. There were no consequences.

The court disclosed our address despite a protection order.

I wish that violence in any form is taken seriously.

Every child has a right to a violence-free childhood.

I am afraid and feel unheard. Please help ensure children like me are protected.

Paul, 9, Bavaria

Dear Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

I wish I were not forced to stay overnight with my father because he hits me and I do not want to sleep alone in the basement.

I am afraid there.

I would like not to go to my father at all because I want to play with my friends and not be hit anymore.

I wish the court would listen to me when I am asked, and that the guardian ad litem would not pressure or trap me.

Ronja, 10, NRW

Dear Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

I wish you would not believe how a father behaves when he is filmed, but instead believe the children.

I still have to see him even though I gave him many chances not to hurt me anymore.

Viola, 4, Nauen (Brandenburg)

Dear Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

I wish that:

- I had been believed when I spoke about violence from my father
- I had not been forced to live with my father
- I am heard when I say I want to stay with my mother and not go to my father

Josefine, 9, Amt Schenefeld (Schleswig-Holstein)

Dear Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

I wish that the supervised contact worker at the family court had taken my fear of my father seriously and protected me instead of repeatedly forcing me into contact in tears.

Jan, 8, Liederbach am Taunus (Hesse)

Dear Federal Minister of Justice,

I feel bad about the court case because my family is being separated and I am being separated from my mother unfairly, even though my father has hit me several times.

Please do something so that the court does not separate me, my mother, and my sister.

Ina, 10, Hesse

I wish I do not have to go to boarding school in summer and I do not want this to happen.

I want to stay with my mother because I love her and do not want to be separated from her.

My father went to court and agreed that I should go to boarding school so I would not live with my mother.

Klara, 12, Wolfenbüttel (Lower Saxony)

Dear Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

I wish that the youth welfare office had cared and taken seriously what my half-siblings' father did to me instead of dismissing it by saying: "she is not his child."

Mareike, 11, NRW

Dear Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

I wish I could finally go back home to my mother, who always cared for me lovingly and attentively.

I wish I had not been forced by the youth welfare office and family court in Rheinbach to go to my violent father, who had me taken to a children's home.

I do not understand why the family court granted sole custody to this "father."

When will I be allowed to go home?

Please help me and my mother.

Marie, 7, Amtsgericht Oschersleben (Saxony-Anhalt)

I wish to live with my mother. Instead, I have not been allowed to see her for five years and have to live with my father, who physically and psychologically abuses me.

Lina, 10, Werder (Havel, Brandenburg)

Dear Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

I wish I had been believed when I was asked by the judge, expert witness, and guardian ad litem about my experiences and my wish to live with my mother.

I wish I had not been forced to live with my father.

I find my situation terrible and want to go back to my mother.

Sarra, 14, Berlin

Dear Federal Minister of Justice Hubig,

I wish that:

- I did not have to be 14 before I was believed about what I experienced with my father
- Those who are supposed to support me (e.g., guardian ad litem, youth welfare office) would actually do so instead of trying to impose their own ideas
- It would be easier to change my life; instead, you have to talk to many people, convince them, and hope—yet often nothing happens

- I would be trusted to have my own opinion instead of my views being dismissed as manipulation

Kind regards

Sarra

V. Reports of professionals

Viola Worsch, White Ring (Weißer Ring), Thuringia:

I have worked for 15 years as a volunteer regional coordinator for the organisation Weißer Ring e.V. in Thuringia. What has been happening in family courts for about 8 years can no longer be described. In about 80 cases I see the same pattern:

The mother reports violence; there is a protection hearing; the violence is set aside because one must first look at the children. Meanwhile, children are repeatedly placed with fathers. The arguments are outrageous. In my experience, (often the same) judges work with the same guardians ad litem and experts.

The right of children to protection is completely ignored. The mothers' rights are ignored.

Example: Currently, three children from different families are being forced by the District Court Arnstadt (Judge Naumann and Judge Pilch) to go to violent fathers, or in one case a 9-year-old boy Milan has been living with his father for two years despite clearly reporting sexual abuse. All three children have now given up because nobody cares what they want or fear. Their childhoods are being broken.

We have documented numerous statements from judges, guardians ad litem, and Youth Welfare Office staff. We can prove a lot. But nobody is interested. What is being done to these children is indescribable. Many now show psychosomatic symptoms, behavioural issues, school decline, and refusal. Even this is attributed to maternal incompetence.

Please make it stop.

Claudia Riempp, Dipl. Psych.

As a psychotherapist, I support a mother who was verbally and physically abused during her marriage and has been terrorised by her ex-husband for years. After divorce, he was granted joint custody and visitation rights, which he misuses to continue threatening and humiliating her, alienating the children, encouraging lies, and initiating court proceedings.

Joint custody and visitation were granted despite police-known violence, prior convictions for weapons possession and drug trafficking, and expert reports indicating limited parenting capacity and threatening behaviour.

There must be no custody or visitation rights for violent fathers; otherwise they gain tools to continue terrorising mothers.

Edith Michal, Support Association for Social Services

As Chairwoman of the Support Association for Social Services Unterföhring (Förderverein Soziale Dienste Unterföhring e.V., FSD), which currently has 777 members, I established a support group for single parents in cooperation with all social service organizations in Unterföhring after learning of many distressing experiences from single mothers. This allows me to stay close to the realities faced by parents, and I have witnessed how youth welfare offices and courts deal with affected families, particularly with regard to children's welfare. Many decisions are met with disbelief. We are appalled.

Therefore, I sincerely thank you for advocating so strongly for this group of people. Especially for the well-being of children, it is long overdue that the Istanbul Convention is finally implemented in Germany.

Theresa, Feminist Law Clinic

The Feminist Law Clinic regularly receives cases involving domestic and sexualized violence, as well as enquiries about legal options and access to protection and justice. In our advisory practice, we repeatedly observe that the requirements of the Istanbul Convention have not yet been fully implemented in Germany.

This is particularly evident in sexual criminal law. The Istanbul Convention requires a consent-based approach, according to which any sexual act without freely given consent must be criminalized.

However, German law continues to focus on an identifiable opposing will. This presupposes that affected persons are able to actively express resistance. In reality, however, many victims react with freezing, fear, or overwhelm and are not in a position to clearly say no.

The focus on the victim's resistance behavior creates gaps in protection and does not reflect the reality of sexualized violence. We therefore call for the consistent implementation of the Istanbul Convention through the introduction of a genuine consent-based model ("yes means yes").

Evelyn Zander, lawyer, Schwabach:

I represent women nationwide who have fallen victim to domestic violence in family courts. My clients repeatedly have to experience in local and higher regional courts in Germany: - Ignoring even proven domestic violence in visitation and custody arrangements - Degrading the victim as uncooperative - Claiming that the children have surely already forgotten the violence they witnessed - Encouraging post-separation violence through counseling requirements - Not taking the Istanbul Convention into account - Disregarding the best interests of the child.

Steffi Dellmann, social worker & consultant

In my work with mothers, I see that their need for protection often takes a backseat to visitation arrangements. Experiences of violence are not taken seriously enough and usually only get attention in cases of clear escalation or proven physical abuse. On top of that, there's a lack of low-threshold support services and enough trained professionals who understand violent relationships and the trauma effects on mothers and children!

Stefanie Höke, lawyer, Bielefeld:

I, like everyone else, experience during collaboration with mothers that the rights of mothers are consistently ignored due to the disregard of the Istanbul Convention. Domestic violence is ignored, even when mothers openly talk about it, they are accused of being intolerant in their parenting, and they are told to look to the future and finally switch from dealing with relationship issues to the parenting level. This happens in almost every case. Just recently, I have a client whose child's father threatened her with rat poison during a care plan meeting because he didn't want to play her games anymore. The youth welfare office staff heard this threat in the meeting but did not include it in the report. The youth welfare office knows that the father is charged with domestic violence during the marriage and that the criminal court has already been scheduled. But the youth welfare office expects the mother to continue making sure the child handovers happen. She needs to shift from a couple level to a parent level.

Sebastian Tippe, graduate educator, child protection specialist, guardian ad litem, and expert in family court proceedings, Braunschweig

In my work related to family court cases, I experience daily that the Istanbul Convention is being disregarded and ignored. Violence against children and mothers is vehemently denied and claimed to be just made up. When mothers or children report violence, it is used against them—mothers are threatened, put under pressure, or children are moved to the perpetrator against their will.

In the training for guardians ad litem, the Istanbul Convention is not mentioned at all. If participants ask specifically, the instructors respond that they have no knowledge of the Istanbul Convention and therefore do not discuss it during the training either. At the same time, it is regularly presented that mothers supposedly invent violence and abuse in almost all cases. The goal of mothers is said to be to keep children away from their fathers and alienate them. Consequently, the top priority for aspiring guardians ad litem is not to believe the mothers or children under any circumstances and to put a stop to them. If they still talk about violence, mothers are supposedly to be threatened that if they do not stop talking about violence or abuse, the children will otherwise be relocated to the father, even with the help of the police.

A presiding judge at a higher regional court said during training that mothers urgently need to be broken.

It's no different in the training programs for experts that I know: the Istanbul Convention isn't mentioned there at all. Instead, several hours are spent talking about mothers who supposedly mostly have Münchhausen by Proxy or other serious conditions like 'Parental Alienation Syndrome,' or 'PAS' for short.

In addition, trainers for experts regularly warn participants about me because I wrote the book 'Toxic Masculinity: Recognize, Reflect, Change' and point out violence and its effects. During my work as a legal guardian, fathers repeatedly threatened me, stalked me, filed complaints against me, hacked my computer, as well as the court's and the youth welfare office's computers (without any consequences for them), and tried to have me removed from the cases through their lawyers. The reason: because I talked about the proven violence of the fathers. This led me to have to change my last name for self-protection.

In a recent case, a judge told me in private that he would like to do much more for children and mothers affected by violence, but he can't, because otherwise the Higher Regional Court would just overturn his decisions.

Methodologically critical reviews of expert reports that I prepare are sometimes not even submitted by lawyers at all, because they fear that the situation for the mothers and children could get even worse, even though the results of the reviews clearly confirmed that the reports – which, for example, alleged that the mothers were suffering from PAS – were flawed.

Moreover, courts and experts still use concepts like 'PAS', even though the Federal Constitutional Court long ago stated in a ruling that PAS should be considered refuted. I regularly receive orders for expert assessments to 'diagnose' whether mothers would be suffering from 'PAS'. Currently, they are also trying to circumvent the Federal Constitutional Court's ruling by using synonyms to silence mothers who point out violence by the fathers.

Statement by Münsteraner Mamas e.V. on the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention

The Istanbul Convention obliges Germany to effectively protect women and children affected by domestic violence. Our experiences as Münsteraner Mamas e.V., a mothers' initiative against institutional violence in family court proceedings, however, show that there is a significant gap between this commitment and reality.

It's not the violence that becomes the problem, but those who call it out and demand protection. We see precisely this as one of the most serious contradictions to the Istanbul Convention.

We are mothers who find ourselves in family court proceedings after experiencing partner violence. We observe recurring structural patterns in which affected people are not adequately protected and state institutions fail to fulfill their duty to protect.

Time and again, we see that mothers who call out violence by the child's father and demand protection for their children end up being treated as the problem themselves. Instead of investigating the reported violence, the mothers come under the spotlight of the institutions. They are pathologized, portrayed as difficult or uncooperative, and not infrequently are even labeled as potential threats to the child's well-being. This leads to a reversal of victim and perpetrator: it's not the violent parent who is the focus, but the mother who is trying to protect her child. Equally concerning is how children's wishes are handled.

If children are afraid of their father or refuse contact due to their own experiences of violence, their wishes are often not taken seriously as a sign of needing protection. Instead, they're quickly seen as the result of influence or manipulation by the mother. This tends to downplay or ignore any signs of violence.

From our point of view, this is a systemic problem. When violence against women and children isn't recognized institutionally or isn't taken seriously enough, and mothers seeking protection are punished instead, victims experience victim-blaming and secondary victimization. Wherever state institutions fail to recognize violence, punish those seeking protection, and add extra burdens, this becomes institutional violence. The Istanbul Convention isn't just a political goal; it's binding law. Women and children have a right to effective protection.