

ASYL IN DEUTSCHLAND – Die Anhörung - englisch

If you have left your home country due to war or persecution, and come to Germany, you have the right to asylum. To make use of this right, you have to apply for asylum from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (in German, the BAMF). Asylum is only granted under certain conditions. The BAMF checks whether your application fulfils these conditions.

You will get a letter from the BAMF with an appointment for your HEARING. IN German: Die Anhörung. At the hearing, a BAMF employee will listen to your story carefully, check the details you have given, and decide whether Germany will recognize you as a refugee. As such, the hearing is very important.

The hearing is your chance to tell the BAMF what happened to you in your home country, and why you couldn't stay there. You can also say what would happen to you if you had to go back. You will only be given asylum if the BAMF employee believes that you left your country because of WAR or PERSECUTION.

But what exactly is persecution? Persecution means your life is in danger or you are treated unfairly, but the state in your homeland does not or cannot protect you. People can be persecuted because they belong to a particular ETHNIC GROUP, because of their RELIGION, because of their POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, because of their SKIN COLOUR, their SEX or their SEXUAL ORIENTATION. They can be persecuted by the state, or by other groups - even by their own family.

It can take a long time until your hearing comes. Use this time to prepare. It's important that you remember everything. Write your story down, and practice it by telling it to others. Describe everything in the order that it happened, and with as much detail as possible.

Each adult is heard individually. Stories are long and complicated - that's normal. You have the right to say everything that you find important, without being interrupted.

If you're not sure any more about certain dates or details, it's important that you say so. Don't make anything up. This will usually be noticed, and can lead to your asylum application being turned down.

You'll be asked many questions in the hearing. Don't let that put you off. Get advice before the hearing from a refugee advice center or a specialized lawyer.

If you have any evidence to back up your story, bring it with you to the hearing: this could be photos, videos, emails, letters, documents, medical records, medicines or their packaging, newspaper articles, Facebook posts, witness statements, and so on. If there's other evidence that you still don't have, mention it at the hearing and say you will submit it when you can.

The BAMF will provide you with an interpreter.

The interpreter is only allowed to translate what you say in the hearing. If you don't understand the interpreter, or don't trust him or her, say so at the hearing - even if it feels difficult. If you want, you can bring your own interpreter, or someone to accompany you. You can also say whether you'd prefer a man or a woman for the hearing or as an interpreter. All this, has to be applied for in advance writing however.

The hearing is confidential. No one is allowed to pass on anything you say.

It may feel difficult talking about bad experiences. That's normal. Don't let yourself be rushed. You can take breaks during the hearing. If necessary, you can continue on another day.

Everything you say at the hearing is noted in a REPORT. You have the right to have this report translated back into your language at the hearing, so that you can check it. You should definitely do this. If there are mistakes or misunderstandings, you can correct them. Only sign the report when it is complete and correct.

The report should be sent to you by post within a few weeks. If not, seek advice.

After the hearing, more time will pass. Then you will get a yellow letter with the decision on your asylum application. This letter is important, so make sure the BAMF always has your up-to-date address.

If you are recognized as a refugee, you will get a temporary RESIDENCY PERMIT which allows you to live and work in Germany.

If you are NOT recognized as a refugee, you can appeal against the decision. For this, you have just a little time from the date you got the letter. So, make sure you keep the envelope - the post mark proves when it was sent. Look for a refugee advice center or a lawyer immediately.

As a refugee seeking asylum, you have the right for your application to be considered seriously, and for your story to be heard. Asylum is complicated. Whenever you have any questions, look for help and advice. Here are some places you can turn to.