

## ***Solidarity Instead of Bezahlkarte!***

One of the stated main objections to introduce the one million expensive cashcard (Bezahlkarte) system in Brandenburg 2025 was to “minimise the administrative burden on local authorities”. But the administrative costs increased – at least initially. And after implementation the costs only decrease if the local district previously had a complex (or racist) cash payment system, by which they did not transfer support to usual bank accounts.



**Clearly, the cashcard is no humble digitalization, it is racism. It is intended to humiliate and deter people fleeing to Germany from coming.** In June 2025 around 5.000 people became victim of the Bezahlkarte and 10.000 more are to get the cashcard this year in Brandenburg. We are facing problems like:

**1. Limited financial autonomy:** The Cashcard restricts the ability to manage finances freely. Purchases must be done in certain places and may not align with your specific needs or cultural preferences, potentially leading to difficulties in accessing essential goods and services. Transferring money to a friend or family is not possible. It also limits cash withdrawals up to only 50€, but also limits online transactions, or specific types of purchases.

**2. Stigma and social exclusion:** The use of a specialized card stigmatizes and makes us feel like second-class humans. The color of the card and that it doesn't belong to any bank makes the owner of the card conspicuous. When you want to pay, you get derogatory looks from fellow shoppers, especially cashiers. The card also limits our ability to integrate

into the local community. For example, you can't buy at second hand shops, Dominos or at the Tafel (foodbank) in my Landkreis OSL.

**3. Debts:** Because every transfer to the card is checked and only then (sometimes) authorised, some of our money does not arrive on time. This results in debts that is not the responsibility of the government (!), but of the refugee (to Deutsche Bahn, where we have a standing order with, for example).

**With our project “Solidarity Instead Of Bezahlkarte”, we will not allow ourselves to be degraded.** We begin our struggle with gathering information and supporting one another with workarounds or info about places, where people will, in solidarity, exchange cash against vouchers we can

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buy. We also like to organize more exchange places.

The second step is to go to local politicians and the public with testimonials from victims of the cashcard and solidary workers in the administration or counseling. We want the governments in the 14 local districts and 3 towns of Brandenburg to abolish the Bezahlkarte

(Potsdam already said they don't want to introduce it)

**We will build bridges, form a coalition and step by step, we will abolish the racist cashcard! Cause we know: Solidarity will win!**



## ***On November 25, 2025, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: MINI-CONFERENCE STOP FEMICIDE — JUSTICE FOR RITA!***

At the panel discussion on November 25, refugee women from various countries gave powerful accounts of severe forms of domestic violence, torture, and death threats, not only within marriage. Many are forced to flee to save their lives. Even after arriving here, refugee women continue to live in danger, including in the camps:

Rita O., a refugee woman, was with her children in the remote shelter in Hohenleipisch. In April 2019, she was reported missing. Despite clear indications of a crime, the authorities reacted hesitantly. Only after three months was her body—buried and burned—found just 300 meters from the shelter.

For six and a half years, Women in Exile, together with its supporters, has been demanding that femicide be investigated.

The activists called on the authorities to finally take action and find Rita's killer. To stop femicides in general, it is essential to break the silence, support victims of violence, strengthen protective structures, and combat discrimination, sexism, racism, and prejudice.

**“Silence doesn't protect –  
speaking out saves lives.”**



# *From The Margins To The FHXB Museum: Our Archive As A Tool Of Resistance*

Women in Exile & Friends is excited to announce our upcoming exhibition at the FHXB Kreuzberg Museum, opening on February 12, 2026. This exhibition marks an important milestone in our long-term archiving project, a collective effort to preserve, honour, and make visible the struggles and achievements of refugee women\* who have been organising for dignity and equal rights for more than two decades.

Archiving, for us, is more than collecting documents. It is an act of empowerment and helps us avoid starting from zero each time.. Too often, the voices and perspectives of refugee women\* are excluded from official records, public memory, and institutional histories. By building our own archive, we are claiming space for our experiences and ensuring that future generations can access our narratives, not filtered, not forgotten, but told in our own words.

The exhibition at the FHXB will bring these stories into dialogue with the wider public. Through photographs, video interviews, campaign materials, and artworks created within our community, visitors will encounter the everyday realities of women\* living in isolation camps, resisting racist policies, and forging new networks of solidarity. The exhibition will also highlight the evolution of our activism: from early protest marches to national campaigns for the abolition of Lagers and for the right to safe, self-determined living.

Most importantly, this exhibition affirms that archiving is part of our political work. It strengthens our collective memory, helps us reflect on how far we've come,



and inspires our ongoing struggle, allowing new members, especially young refugee and migrant women\* of color to learn how we organized, what tactics worked and how we supported each other. Sharing these histories invites others to reflect on their own position, creating openings for dialogue that are grounded not only in theory, but in humanity.

We invite supporters, allies, and newcomers to join us in imagining, and building a future where refugee women\* are recognised as the authors of their own stories.

**We look forward to welcoming you in February 2026 as we celebrate this next chapter together.**



## Interview With A Participant Of The Women In Exile Meetings For Refugee Women\*



*This interview was edited to shorten it.*

### WiE: How did you learn about WiE?

F: I learned about Women in Exile through an online friend in a WhatsApp group who spoke very positively about the support she received. She said it was not only a political group fighting for refugee women's rights, but also a space where women come together, feel safe, and are understood.

### WiE: What motivated you to keep attending the meetings?

F: The combination of community, practical support and empowerment kept me attending the Saturday meetings. I wanted a place to openly share challenges and learn to navigate life in Germany—dealing with the asylum system, health issues, and daily struggles. During the Dublin procedure, one of the most stressful and uncertain periods of my life, WiE connected me with a solidarity network that helped me through that difficult time.

### WiE: How would you describe your experience of the Saturday meetings?

F: Their acts of care left a deep impression because they practise solidarity in real, practical ways, not just talk. WiE's transportation support made it easier to attend—important when travelling from remote locations is difficult and expensive. Providing food made the meetings more welcoming and removed the stress of preparing meals before or after a long journey. Those small considerations showed they care about our well-being and encouraged my participation.

### WiE: What is your opinion on the regular workshops held during the meetings?

F: The Saturday workshops offer more than information sharing. They bring together women with varied experiences of displacement, hardship and resilience in a space where they are truly seen, heard and valued. The atmosphere combines learning, healing and collective empowerment. The most striking aspect is how the workshops blend practical knowledge with emotional solidarity—equipping women to navigate complex systems while reminding them they are not alone. The workshops act as community care: stories are shared, confidence rebuilt, and often-silenced voices find strength. The Saturday sessions are spaces for growth, resistance and connection.

### WiE: How would you envisage these meetings in the future?

F: I envision workshops evolving into a more intentional, layered learning system—thematic cycles where each session builds on the last (e.g., “health and well-being,” “legal rights,” “self-advocacy,” “community storytelling”). Participants could progress from learners to co-facilitators, passing on knowledge and strengthening collective capacity. The goal is not to lose the energy of big gatherings but to channel it more effectively so workshops remain vibrant, inclusive, empowering, better organized, calmer and more impactful.

***We meet every first Saturday of the month from 1 pm to 4 pm. Travel expenses are covered. Childcare and translation into English, French, and German are provided. Snacks and drinks are also available. If you require translation into other languages, please contact us in advance. Please let us know if you plan to attend by calling the number below or sending an email.***



### KEEP IN TOUCH

Website: [women-in-exile.net](http://women-in-exile.net)  
Facebook: “Women in Exile & Friends”  
Twitter: [https://twitter.com/women\\_in\\_exile](https://twitter.com/women_in_exile)  
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### DONATIONS

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*We thank the following foundations and organisations for their continued support of our work:*

