



**REGARDING THE ACTIONS (OR INACTION) OF THE AUTHORITIES  
OF ITALY, THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND JAPAN  
RESULTING IN DESTRUCTION AND FALSIFICATION OF HISTORY,  
JUSTIFICATION OF FASCISM AND ITS ACCOMPLICES**

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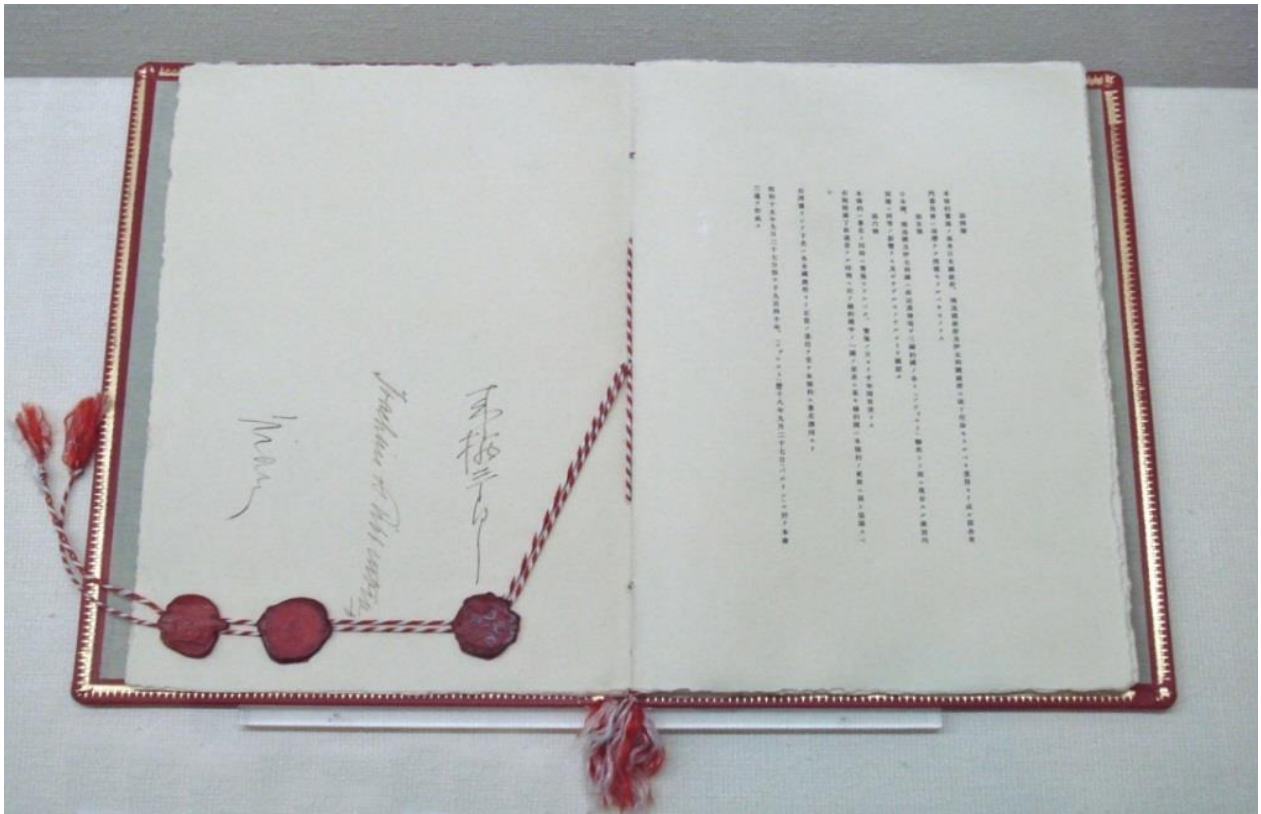
## Introduction

Today – in the year of the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Great Victory in World War II – not only in Russia, but around the world, many people rightly ask themselves the question: how well have the lessons of the fight against Nazism, fascism and militarism been learned following that terrible war?

The public of both friendly and unfriendly towards Russia states, aware of the horrors of those times, witnesses the dangerous attempts made by a number of modern leaders and political elites to change the objective reality, destroy and rewrite the history of World War II, revise its results, whitewash the war criminals who created and put into practice the theory of racial superiority, and their accomplices, glorify Nazi collaborators.

In a number of countries, the crimes of Hitlerism are deliberately hushed up, and the glorification of Nazism and the rewriting of the history of World War II reach the level of state policy.

It is especially alarming that such destructive processes are developing most rapidly in Germany, Italy and Japan – the founders of the aggressive Nazi bloc of the Axis countries (Aachsenmächte (German); 枢軸国 Sūjikukoku (Japanese); potenze dell'Asse (Italian) according to the term "axis: Berlin – Rome – Tokyo"), which during the World War II opposed the Anti-Hitler coalition.



*Copy of the Tripartite Pact<sup>1</sup>*

Signing on 27 September 1940 the Tripartite Pact on the delimitation of zones of influence in the establishment of a "new order" and military mutual assistance (also known as the Axis alliance, the Three-Power Pact, the Berlin Pact), Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and militaristic Japan proceeded from the common strategic goals and ideological basis uniting them – all these states sought to revise the existing world order, assert their dominance in various regions, and spread ideological principles opposing democracy and communism.

As part of the pact, Japan recognized "the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe." In response, Germany and Italy recognized Japan's right to establish a new order in "Greater East Asia."

<sup>1</sup> [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/65/Tripartite\\_Pact\\_27\\_September\\_1940.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/65/Tripartite_Pact_27_September_1940.jpg)



*Japanese poster dedicated to the signing of the Tripartite Pact<sup>2</sup>*

History repeats itself, and the patterns developed in Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and militaristic Japan find application these days. Attempts are being made to reform public consciousness, erase historical memory, inter alia, among younger generations, support and legalize neopagan and satanist movements, oppose canonical Orthodoxy, etc.

Thus, Nazi collaborators who committed war crimes and crimes against humanity are declared participants in national liberation movements that allegedly fought for the "independence" of their states. Curricula and cultural projects serve to glorify the "feat" of volunteer members of the national SS legions who fought for Nazi Germany and were involved in numerous massacres of civilians. The tacit

<sup>2</sup> [https://lenta.ru/articles/2019/07/24/khalkhin\\_gol/](https://lenta.ru/articles/2019/07/24/khalkhin_gol/)

consent of the authorities or their encouragement has unleashed the activities of radical nationalists and right-wing extremists, who are often the main perpetrators of the cynical "war" against monuments to Soviet soldiers-liberators.

For their achievements in fighting the "Russian world" and Soviet memorial heritage, the nationalists are privileged to preach the idea of the "true patriotism" to the society as a whole. In most cases, the national authorities do not take any measures to suppress such bacchanalia, but, on the contrary, they stimulate it. Protests against such incidents expressed by Russian diplomatic missions remain vastly without response. Representatives of civil society are simply ignored or even subjected to repressive measures.

The "vaccine against Nazism," developed as a result of the Nuremberg Tribunal, becomes ineffective in a number of European countries, including Germany. Many decades after the end of World War II, such political elites come to power in this country, who begin to gradually, step by step, deny its results, digress from the policy of denazification and rehabilitate Nazism, in fact openly engaging in historical revanchism.

At the behest of the top political leadership of Germany, which doctrinally proclaimed Russia "the main threat to security and peace," a massive militaristic manipulation of public opinion is carried out in the public space of the Federal Republic of Germany, theses about the existential nature of the "Russian threat" and the inevitability of an imminent military clash with Russia are instilled through mainstream media. Revanchists do not mince words. Chancellor Friedrich Merz, for example, agreed that "Russian aggressive revisionism threatens security in Europe and throughout the Euro-Atlantic region." Federal Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul bluntly stated that Russia had become a German "enemy for life." Some of the most aggressive Russophobes from the deputy corps publicly urged "to show the Russians what it is like to lose the war."

Revisionist tendencies are gaining momentum in Germany. The false postulate about the equal responsibility of the "two totalitarian regimes" for

unleashing the World War II has long become the basic postulate in the German culture of memory, and the results of the post-war settlement are the main target of official propaganda. The promoted falsifications are focused on the fragmentation of the historical memory and deeds of the Soviet people, including the division of the victims of war on the basis of their nationality, the denial of the Great Victory as an act of liberation of Europe with reference to "replacing one tyranny with another." The process of repentance in Germany for the crimes of the Nazi regime is reduced mainly to the topic of the Holocaust; they prefer not to remember the victims among the Soviet citizens. It is not surprising that in this atmosphere, the German law enforcement agencies have not considered unlawful the actions of the leadership of the museum of the former Nazi concentration camp "Dachau", which ordered its employees to cut off ribbons that bore colours of the national flags of Russia and Belarus on the wreaths laid during a commemorative ceremony dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the Victory.

In the year of the 80th anniversary of the Great Victory over Nazi Germany, former German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, who came to power with the ideas of rabid and fierce revanchism and is making her career on supporting and rehabilitating Nazism, was nominated for the position of President of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, that was created after World War II and that categorically and unequivocally condemned fascism. Berlin's decision to nominate this extremely dubious figure for a high UN post was a slap in the face of the universal organization. It was under the leadership of this avid Russophobe that the German Foreign Ministry recommended not inviting the representatives of Russia and Belarus to commemorative events on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. It turns out that the grandchildren of Nazi executioners – and Baerbock's grandfather is known to have served in the SS – are allowed to exclude from the events commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Victory over Hitler's Germany the descendants of those

who, at the cost of 27 million of lives, liberated not only their country, but also the whole Europe from fascism.

The revanchist essence of modern Japan's politics is clearly confirmed by official Tokyo's persistent imposition of false interpretations of the events of the mid-twentieth century that determined the fate of humanity.

In fact, today, this country is the only one on the planet that refuses to fully recognize the results of the post-war settlement, seeking to whitewash or silence the numerous crimes committed by the Japanese military as part of the barbaric expansionist campaign in East Asia in the first half of the twentieth century.

Instead of fully realizing the responsibility for the aggression unleashed in the 1930s-1940s in Asia and offering sincere apologies for the suffering caused to its peoples, Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya during a press conference on 8 August 2025, on the eve of the 80th anniversary of the Victory over militaristic Japan and the end of World War II celebrated on 3 September, cynically declared the "unlawfulness" of the USSR's entry into hostilities against Japan on 9 August 1945 and the "illegal occupation" of the southern Kuril Islands.

Such rhetoric is unacceptable for a statesman of this level, and even more so it cannot change the reality in any way: the southern Kuril Islands passed to the USSR, whose successor State is the Russian Federation, on legal grounds enshrined in the Allied powers' post-war agreements and the UN Charter.

Since the centre-right government headed by Giorgia Meloni came to power in Italy in October 2022, there has been a tendency towards a more tolerant attitude on the part of the authorities towards apologia for the fascist regime's values and "achievements", which has intensified in some segments of society, cases of public display of symbols and rituals of the two decades of fascism. In 2024, Ignazio La Russa, the President of the Italian Senate and a member of the Brothers of Italy party, made several high-profile statements that he did not want to celebrate the day of Italy's liberation from fascism (25 April) and that he wanted to keep his home collection of fascist relics (photographs, medals, and a bust of Benito



Mussolini). During her tenure, the Prime Minister herself has never made a statement strongly and uncompromisingly condemning fascism. Giorgia Meloni also stated that Ukrainians had the right to glorify Stepan Bandera, a fascist.

This study consists of three sections which, using the example of criminal actions (inaction) of the current authorities of Germany, Italy and Japan, show in detail how history is being destroyed and falsified, how fascism and its accomplices are being justified, how unpleasant facts of the historical past of the Axis countries are being retouched, how the role of the Soviet Union in achieving the Victory is being downgraded, including by hindering the celebration of 9 May on the territory of the mentioned states. The report focuses on the ideological proximity of modern leaders and political elites of the mentioned states to the fascist and militaristic regimes of the 1930s-1940s, as well as the current spread of revanchist ideas in these states (especially in Germany and Japan). This is reflected, among other things, in their efforts to whitewash their own criminal past, in the fight against anti-fascists, as well as in the support for neo-Nazi regimes in Kiev and the Baltic states. This topic was included in the second joint report of the Foreign Ministry of Russia and the Foreign Ministry of Belarus on the Human Rights Situation in Certain Countries published in June 2025, and is also regularly mentioned in the annual reports of the Russian Foreign Ministry on human rights record, including regarding the situation with the glorification of Nazism and the spread of neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Since 2022, for the third consecutive year, the three main partners of the Axis alliance – Germany, Italy and Japan – have voted against the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" that is put forward every year by Russia and other co-sponsors.

This is the first time in history that the member countries of the Hitler coalition of the World War II period have openly opposed the document condemning the glorification of Nazism and various forms of racial discrimination.

The fact that for the past three years these countries, which are directly responsible for killing tens of millions of people, have voted against the resolution demanding to prevent the revival of Nazism, makes think about the ideological processes in these countries and in the West as a whole. It is also obvious that these states have decided to ignore the commitments and promises made when joining the UN.

## Italy

Italy having been a member of the aggressive Nazi block of countries of the "Axis" during World War II possesses a substantial legal framework to counteract contemporary manifestations of fascism and efforts to revive it. Article 12 of the final provisions of the Italian Republic's Constitution prohibits the re-establishment of any fascist party that had been dissolved following Italy's defeat in World War II.

In 1952, the Shelby Law was enacted, making it a crime to organize groups, associations, or movements that exhibit characteristics of the Fascist Party and aim to restore it. Publicly lauding "the figures, principles, acts, and methods of the fascist regime or its anti-democratic objectives" was a criminal offence. In 1957, the Constitutional Court made changes to the Shelby Law, penalizing only those fascist apologetics which could result in the resurgence of a fascist party.

In 1993, the Mancino Law was passed as a sequel to the Shelby Law, which criminalized "the dissemination of ideas founded on racial superiority, racial and ethnic animosity, and the praise of figures, principles, acts, and methods of the fascist government or its anti-democratic objectives."

At the end of 2017, the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house of the Italian parliament) sanctioned the initial passage of the Fiano Law, condemning "the production, marketing, distribution, sale of objects with images and portraits of fascist figures, symbols, propaganda in public space of symbols and attributes of the fascist party, including gestures". The use of the Internet for these purposes was deemed an intensifying factor. However, the law was not adopted.

Nevertheless, Italy's legislation still contains remnants of the Fascist regime. Sergio Rizzo and Alessandro Campi, authors of "The Long Shadow of Fascism" (2022), reveal that there are currently 249 legal acts (regulations, decrees and laws) in Italy which make mention of the concept of "race".

In 2022, Italy, together with its former Nazi "Axis" allies of World War II (Germany, Japan, etc.), cast their vote for the first time opposing the draft annual

UN General Assembly resolution on "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance". The resolution was proposed by Russia and other co-sponsors. This marks the inaugural occasion in which former members of Hitler's coalition from World War II have openly dissented against a document condemning the glorification of Nazism and various forms of racial discrimination. In prior instances, the Italian government had followed the EU's collective stance by abstaining from voting. In 2023 and 2024, Italy also voted against the Russian draft of the resolution.

The topic of fascism in the social and political life of Italy is not "taboo", but in the public space, representatives of the government are generally careful not to incriminate themselves with nostalgia for the "iron hand of the Duce".

In October 2022, with the election of the centre-right government led by Georgia Meloni, there has been a tendency to a more tolerant attitude on the part of the authorities towards a growing apologetic of values and progress achieved by the fascist regime in some segments of society, cases of public reproduction of symbols and rituals of two fascist decades. In 2024, Ignazio La Russa, President of the Italian Senate and co-founder of the Brothers of Italy party, was known for his loud statements on his unwillingness to commemorate the day of Italy's liberation from fascism (25 April) and his intentions to maintain a collection of fascist memorabilia at his residence, which includes photographs, medals, and a bust of Benito Mussolini.

Under the presidency of Georgia Meloni, the apologetic of values and progress achieved by the fascist regime in some segments of society became more frequent, there was a tendency to a more tolerant attitude on the part of the authorities towards cases of public reproduction of symbols and rituals of two fascist decades. The prime minister herself during her presidency has never decisively and uncompromisingly condemned fascism.

The media also noted that the Italian leader used fascist rhetorics. In 2024,

Georgia Meloni used the term "Western nationalism" during her speech in New York when she was receiving a Global Citizen Award 2024 of the Atlantic Council (the structure banned in the Russian Federation). She declared in particular: "I know that we should not be ashamed to use and defend words and concepts like Nation and Patriotism, because they mean more than a physical place; they mean a state of mind to which one belongs in sharing culture, traditions, and values." The Italian prime minister's words remind of the main points of the fundamental work of Benito Mussolini the "Doctrine of fascism" (recognized as extremist in the Russian Federation). Some analysts point out that the Brothers of Italy party created by Georgia Meloni, though she might deny it today, has historically been a successor of the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement and even openly uses similar symbols: there are the same tricolored tongues of flame that were at the emblem of the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement party of Giorgio Almirante<sup>3</sup>.

And in November 2023, while speaking with Russian pranksters Vladimir Kuznetsov (Vovan) and Aleksei Stolyarov (Lexus) who said they were senior African government officials, Georgia Meloni declared that the Ukrainians had the right to glorify the nationalist Stepan Bandera.<sup>4</sup>

Another example of the abuse of rights and liberties was the refusal in April 2024 by one state TV channel to offer air time to a well-known Italian publicist anti-fascist Antonio Scurati who publicly criticised the government for connivance to neo-fascist ideas. The scandal arisen because of this incident caused a significant resonance in Italian political and social circles and world media. The opponents of Georgia Meloni in Italy and abroad used this episode to accuse the President of the Council of Ministers of limiting the freedom of expression, historical revisionism and authoritarianism.

Italy has a number of far-right organizations with nationalist and near neo-

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3 [https://www.stoletie.ru/politika/i\\_novyj\\_duche\\_792.htm](https://www.stoletie.ru/politika/i_novyj_duche_792.htm)

4 <https://iz.ru/1598407/2023-11-01/premer-italii-zaiavila-o-prave-ukrainy-na-geroizatciiu-bandery>

fascist views, the largest of which are the national far-right parties Casa Pound<sup>5</sup>, Forza Nuova<sup>6</sup> and Movimento Fascismo e Libertà – Partito Socialista Nazionale. They have traditionally received no more than 1 per cent of the vote in parliamentary and European elections. In addition, there are a number of small radical organizations at regional and local levels.<sup>7</sup> The Italian authorities appear to neither perceive nor acknowledge a significant threat to public order or state security emanating from these peripheral political groups.

Italian law enforcement officers monitor the activities of illegal neo-Nazi groups. On 15 November 2022, a law enforcement operation in Naples, Caserta, and Avellino (Campania) led to the detention of four individuals belonging to the Order of Hagal group focused on promoting a hateful ideology, recruiting and providing military training to its adherents. It has been reported that members of this group were involved in the circulation of prohibited literature online and received training for knife and hand-to-hand fighting. Further enquiries exposed that the group had communication with Ukrainian neo-Nazis belonging to the Azov Battalion and the Right Sector<sup>8</sup>.

In October 2022, Italian law enforcement apprehended individuals linked to a neo-Nazi organization associated with "The Base" from the United States in Bari (Puglia). During the detention, propaganda assets and objects featuring swastikas were seized. The cell members are under suspicion of planning terrorist attacks.<sup>9</sup> In December 2024, as part of the ongoing investigation the law enforcement agents established that the members of the organization planned the murder of President of the Council of Ministers Giorgia Meloni who they called "a fascist prosecuting

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<sup>5</sup> This political movement, founded in 2003, owns its own publishing house, Altaforte.

<sup>6</sup> As a political party founded in 1997.

<sup>7</sup> For example, "Lealta Azione" ("Loyalty and Action", region of Lombardy), "Skin4Skin" (Milano), "Hammerskin" (Milano), "Generazione Identitaria" ("Generation of Personality", Milano), "Manipolo d'Avanguardia" ("Vanguard", Bergamo), "Do.Ra" (Varese), "Militia" (Rome), "Avanguardia Nazionale" (Rome), "Rivolta Nazionale" (Rome), "Fortezza Europa" (Verona), "Veneto Fronte Skinheads" (Vicenza), etc.

<sup>8</sup> <https://tg24.sky.it/napoli/2022/11/15/terrorismo-neonazisti-arresti-oggi/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.rainews.it/articoli/2022/10/terrorismo-internazionale-arrestato-neonazista-a-bari-propaganda-per-discriminazione-razziale--97e52bf6-b029-449f-893f-9be30db94f43.html>

fascists".<sup>10</sup>

Experts note that alongside legally established socio-political associations, there also exist in Italy covert groups of extremists and individuals who may possess an array of firearms, explosives, and extremist literature.

Radicals regularly hold events at sacred places for Italian fascists (e.g. Milan's Maggiore cemetery, where fascist figures are buried) or organize, with varying degrees of success, public actions to mark important dates for the fascist movement. In many Italian cities, including the capital, there are still monuments and memorial plaques dedicated to the Italian fascists and the participants in the colonial wars. Most municipalities do not take any measures to combat this "architectural heritage". In a number of towns (usually of provincial importance), Benito Mussolini retains the title of "honorary citizen", mainly due to the reluctance of the local authorities to repeal the municipal regulations adopted in the 1920s. Benito Mussolini is an honorary citizen of Pietrasanta (Toscana region), Carpi (Emilia Romagna), and Ustica (Sicilia). In 2019, in Ladispoli (Lazio), a place was named after Giorgio Almirante who was responsible for cultural issues in the Italian social republic (a puppet fascist state created by Adolf Hitler in Northern and Central Italy). The streets in such towns as Bari (Puglia), Minturno (Lazio), Castel Volturno (Campania), Pozzuoli (Campania) etc. are named after the closest adherent of Benito Mussolini, marshal of aviation Italo Balbo.

On 30 October 2022, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the March on Rome by the militants of the National Fascist Party, a commemorative procession was held in Predappio (Emilia-Romagna), where Benito Mussolini was born. Fascist slogans and symbols were used, easily available in Italy on the Internet. Participants in the "march" included direct descendants of the dictator. According to the organizers, the event attracted approximately 4,000 individuals (official sources state closer to 2,000), with a minimal number of eight arrests

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<sup>10</sup> [www.gbnews.com/news/world/giorgia-meloni-targeted-assassination-plot-neo-nazi-group-branded-italian-pm-fascist](http://www.gbnews.com/news/world/giorgia-meloni-targeted-assassination-plot-neo-nazi-group-branded-italian-pm-fascist)

made by law enforcement. The "march" is held on a regular basis. In 2024, 600 people took part in the survey.

On 7 January 2025, over one hundred of representatives of ultra-radical movements not hiding their adherence to the "heritage" of Mussolini openly demonstrated fascist "Rome salutation" during an annual event in Rome to commemorate the members of the youth wing of the Italian Social Movement who died in 1978 (Georgia Meloni began her political career in 1992 in the youth wing of this party and made flattering remarks about Benito Mussolini). During verification activities, local law enforcement agencies detained 31 participants of the event. Earlier in January 2024, the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation, having reviewed a previous decision of another court, ruled that the use of "Rome salutation" is a criminal act if "it constitutes a direct threat to public order or is committed in circumstances, involving the reconstitution of a fascist party".<sup>11</sup>

In May 2025, the authorities of Riccione refused to remove the name of Benito Mussolini from the name of the villa which he had used with his family as his summer residence from 1934 till 1943. Shortly before that Benito Mussolini was removed from the list of honorary citizens of this town. The National Association of Partisans of Italy (ANPI) requested to transfer the building that is still listed in the cadaster as "Villa of Mussolini" to the municipality and change its name.<sup>12</sup>

According to a 2020 public report by Italian intelligence agencies<sup>13</sup>, the Italian far-right has intensified its activities on the Internet in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, using the available social media tools to promote racism, antisemitism, xenophobia, and spread conspiracy theories and disinformation. In their work they focus on the deteriorating social and economic situation in the country. Besides, the far-right use the traditional slogans about the protection of

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11 <https://www.giurisprudenzapenale.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/ssuu-saluto-romano.pdf>  
[https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/cronaca/2024/01/18/cassazione-contro-il-saluto-romano-applicare-la-legge-scelba.-la-russa-la-sentenza-si-commenta\\_566fe8ad-abc4-4478-a719-57941a350b1a.html](https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/cronaca/2024/01/18/cassazione-contro-il-saluto-romano-applicare-la-legge-scelba.-la-russa-la-sentenza-si-commenta_566fe8ad-abc4-4478-a719-57941a350b1a.html)

12 [https://www.stoletie.ru/politika/mussolini\\_ostajetsa\\_920.htm](https://www.stoletie.ru/politika/mussolini_ostajetsa_920.htm)

13 <https://www.sicurezzanazionale.gov.it/sisr.nsf/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/RELAZIONE-ANNUALE-2020.pdf>



national identity that are understandable to the population. Since 2022, their propaganda has been focused on the illegal migration.

On 17 May 2025, in Gallarate (Lombardia), there was a meeting of dozens of far-right parties and movements from all over Europe (Austria, France, the Netherlands etc.) dedicated to "remigration" (expulsion of illegal migrants). Federal secretary deputy of the "League" party, MEP Roberto Vannacci participated in the meeting as a representative of Italy.

Generally respectful treatment is also noted in Italy for memorials and monuments erected in honour of those who fought against Nazism and Fascism. Graves of our citizens who died in the Apennines during World War II are being detected, and new memorial sites are being installed. In October 2020, a monument to the Soviet partisan Vladimir Tulisko was unveiled in Caldiero (Province of Verona).<sup>14</sup> On 25 April 2025, speaking in Genova on the occasion of the Day of Liberation from fascism, Italian President Sergio Mattarella separately noted the feat of Soviet partisan Fedor Poletaev who died fighting for Cantalupo Ligure.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, instances of desecration of memorials to victims of fascism have occurred. On 25 April 2022, such an incident transpired in Gallarate, while on 19 February 2023, radical individuals constructed a swastika-shaped object in a Milan municipal park adjacent to a monument dedicated to victims of deportation. The perpetrators responsible for these actions have yet to be identified.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, there are direct instances of history being rewritten, including the glorification of Italian fascists in historiographical and journalistic works. On 26 January 2023, a book was presented at the Centre for Contemporary Art "Luigi Pecci" in Prato (Toscana) that portrayed fascist naval officer Salvatore Todaro (1908-1942) in a positive light.

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<sup>14</sup> In summer 1944, Vladimir Tulisko was among the prisoners sent for forced labour in Trento. He managed to escape. Vladimir Tulisko joined Italian partisan division "Pasubio" operating near Verona. He died near Cordillera during the battle with the Nazis retreating from Italy.

<sup>15</sup> "Intervento del Presidente della Repubblica Sergio Mattarella alla cerimonia, in forma ufficiale, in occasione dell' 80° anniversario della Liberazione". 25.04.2025. "Presidenza della Repubblica".

<https://www.quirinale.it/elementi/131558>

<sup>16</sup> [https://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2023/02/19/news/svastica\\_parco\\_nord\\_milano\\_neofascisti\\_anpi-388555972/](https://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2023/02/19/news/svastica_parco_nord_milano_neofascisti_anpi-388555972/)

Historical and architectural heritage of two fascist decades is manifestly popularised in Italy. For example, from 14 April to 1 September 2024, an art exhibition "Art and Fascism" took place in the Museum of Contemporary Art "MART" (Rovereto) (an autonomous province of Trentino). The exhibits glorifying Duce were presented in isolation from their cultural-historic contexts.

Moreover, Italy turns a blind eye to wide spread of neo-Nazi ideology in Ukraine. In the Italian media there are often publications where attempts are made to whitewash fighters of the "Azov" battalion, to present them as "true patriots" defending the interests of their country. On 3-17 September 2023, in Milano, there was an exhibition "Eyes of Mariupol" glorifying the "Azov" fighters.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the generally tolerant attitude towards Ukrainian neo-Nazis, in Italy there is a practice of providing institutional platforms for the performance of despicable personalities who share neo-Nazi ideology. In February 2024, former member of the Nazi battalion "Azov" Yuliia Paievskaya (Taira) spoke in the Italian Senate. On 27 February 2024, she participated in organizing the screening of the film "20 days in Mariupol" in the deputy chamber.

At the same time, anti-fascist organizations operate in Italy. The National Association of Italian Partisans (ANPI) serves as the primary organization in Italy countering manifestations of neo-fascism, racism, and xenophobia. Catholic and international human rights organizations also actively work in this field. Anti-fascists arrange rallies, marches, and concerts to encourage tolerance and oppose racism, involving migrant communities actively. For instance, a demonstration against fascism was held in Florence on 21 February 2023, with a reported attendance of about 3,000 individuals. In May 2025, in Rome, there was a manifestation with the participation of several hundreds of persons against the opening of a new department of the right-radical party "Forza Nuova". Such manifestations with the participation of trade unions, left-center political forces and catholic movements and organizations are also annually held on 25 April as part of

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<sup>17</sup> See more information about this battalion in part "Ukraine" of this report.

celebrations on the Day of Liberation of Italy from fascism.

Manifestations of xenophobia and racial discrimination in Italy are not solely related to the activities of neo-fascists, as per experts. It's noted that a significant number of such incidents are manifestations of racism that occur in everyday situations. Several reasons for the growth of xenophobic attitudes in Italy have been suggested by experts, including the deterioration of the socio-economic situation of the population, the high level of youth unemployment, and the influx of migrants from Africa and Asia. The media, both local and national, cover the most prominent cases.

In February 2022, the primary Italian press featured excerpts from the report of the National Office against Racial Discrimination, part of the Italian Council of Ministers. According to the data provided by the National Office against Racial Discrimination, in 2021 in Italy, 1,379 episodes of discrimination were detected (913 in 2020), of which 709 (or 51 per cent) were motivated by racial or ethnic intolerance. And these are only registered cases.<sup>18</sup> The EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights (FRA) also relies on the same statistics in its report for 2023 (specifically, out of the 1,379 cases of discrimination recorded by the national equality body in 2021, 709 (51 per cent) were connected to racial and ethnic discrimination), as well as the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in its Report on Italy published in October 2024.

ECRI noted in particular that over the period from 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2022, the National Office against Racial Discrimination recorded 5,277 cases of discrimination out of which 843 were classified as hate speech. 559 (65.1 per cent) were based on race and ethnic origin (including 190 against foreigners, 165 against migrants, 165 on the basis of skin colour and 97 against Roma), 204 (24.2 per cent) on religion or belief (including 101 based on anti-Muslim prejudice, 96 antisemitic). The remaining cases were based on such grounds as disability and age

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<sup>18</sup> The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Fundamental Rights Report 2023.  
[http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023\\_en\\_1.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf)

or were classified as cases of multiple discrimination without enumerating the grounds involved.<sup>19</sup>

Human rights organizations report manifestations of intolerance in the country. The NGO "Italian Observatory for Human Rights" produces during several years its project "New Intolerance Map"<sup>20</sup> that matches the content of discriminatory publications on social media and their geolocation data. The study states that in 2021, Muslims were the target of 19.6 per cent of negative content, with Jews and migrants accounting for 7.6 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively.<sup>21</sup> In 2022, the situation changed: 7.3 per cent of negative publications concerned migrants, 6.6 per cent Jews and 0.2 per cent Muslims.<sup>22</sup> In 2024, 27 per cent of publications were antisemitic in nature, there was a growth of xenophobic and Islamophobic manifestations.<sup>23</sup> Geographically, the highest concentration of negative antisemitic and anti-Muslim publications was recorded in Northern Italy.<sup>24</sup>

ECRI also provided the statistics about hate crimes. According to the data collected by the Observatory for Security against Acts of Discrimination (OSCAD) and reported by Italy to the OSCE, the number of hate crimes (including cases of criminal hate speech) on the grounds relevant to ECRI amounted to 1,202 in 2022, 1,243 in 2021, 919 in 2020, 912 in 2019, 901 in 2018, 891 in 2017, and 532 in 2016. In 2022, the most common types of hate crimes included incitement to violence (299 cases), threats/threatening behaviour (235), disturbance of peace (187), desecration of graves (156), physical assault (130), attacks against places of worship (54) and damage to property (47). ECRI noted that there was no data indicating how many of the cases were prosecuted or leading to criminal

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19 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Italy (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 2 July 2024, published on 22 October 2024. <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-ecri-report-on-italy/1680b205f5>

20 <https://www.voxdiritti.it/>

21 <https://www.voxdiritti.it/la-nuova-mappa-dellintolleranza-6/>

22 <https://www.voxdiritti.it/la-nuova-mappa-dellintolleranza-7/>

23 <https://www.voxdiritti.it/ottava-edizione-mappa-intolleranza/>

24 <http://www.voxdiritti.it/nuovi-dati-della-mappa-dellintolleranza-in-4-mesi-cresce-lantisemitismo/>

sanctions.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the increase in racial discrimination was pointed out by the then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, M. Bachelet, during her speech on 22 January 2022 at the meeting of the Extraordinary Commission of the Italian Senate on Combating Intolerance, Racism, Antisemitism and Incitement to Hatred and Violence.<sup>26</sup> This committee was established in 2019 at the initiative of Senator for life and Nazi death camps prisoner Liliana Segre but began operating only in 2021.<sup>27</sup>

In August 2023, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) noted with concern the persistent and increasing use and normalization of racist hate speech against ethnic groups in the public space of Italy, media and on the Internet. Politicians, including members of government and other high-level public officials, have resorted to such practice against ethnic minorities, particularly Roma, persons of African descent, as well as migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. CERD considers that this is leading to the proliferation of racist hate incidents. This is confirmed by the increasing number of reports of racist hate crimes, including verbal and physical violence against ethnic minorities, resulting sometimes in death. The prevalence of negative stereotypes of Roma, people of African and Arab descent and migrants in Italy was also noted.

In addition, the Committee raised the issue of the widespread use of racial profiling by Italian law enforcement officials. This is accompanied by a high number of cases of racist abuses and ill-treatment, including excessive use of force against ethnic minorities, Roma, people of African descent as well as migrants. CERD encouraged the Italian authorities to take measures to combat this negative practice, to amend the algorithms of police officials, and to establish an effective mechanism to monitor cases of racial profiling, racial discrimination and abuse of

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25 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Italy (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 2 July 2024, published on 22 October 2024. <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-ecri-report-on-italy/1680b205f5>

26 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2022/01/hearing-italian-senates-extraordinary-commission-against>

27 <https://moked.it/international/2019/11/04/news-italian-senate-approves-committee-antisemitism-hatred/>

authority by law enforcement officials, including in the context of document checks, traffic stops, and inspections at the border.<sup>28</sup>

The International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement following their visit to Italy early May 2024 also noted that the issue of racial profiling was becoming more acute. The Mechanism heard testimonies on racial profiling as a basis for identity checks and stop-and-searches by different law enforcement agencies in Italy, under the assumption either that the person was not an Italian citizen, or on presumptions of criminality. Besides, it was noted that this racial bias, stereotypes and profiling created harmful and spurious associations of Blackness with criminality and delinquency. The experts also noted that the legitimate task to promote citizens safety and security should not be construed as a license to engage in racial profiling. This practice erodes trust in law enforcement, and as a result, reduces law enforcement effectiveness. Among the Mechanism's findings was a lack of comprehensive data disaggregated by race or ethnic origin in all aspects of life, especially regarding interactions with law enforcement and the criminal justice system. Such lack of disaggregated data hampering efforts to address racial disparities. The Mechanism also expressed concerns about overcrowding in Italian prisons, highlighting the disproportionate incarceration of Africans and people of African descent, which further highlighted the prevalence of systemic racism. Concerns were also raised about the challenges migrants and asylum seekers face in accessing legal protections, often exacerbated by law enforcement abuse of authority and bureaucratic delays.<sup>29</sup>

Similar concerns were expressed by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in 2024. The public discourse has become increasingly

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28 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the 21<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Italy. August 2023.

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FITA%2FCO%2F21-22&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FITA%2FCO%2F21-22&Lang=en)

29 Statement by the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement following the visit to Italy. 10 May 2024. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/italy-un-experts-racial-justice-law-enforcement-warn-racial-profiling-risk>

xenophobic and political speech has taken on highly divisive and antagonistic overtones particularly targeting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, as well as Italian citizens with migration backgrounds and Roma. Such speech was the most frequently recorded during elections, inter alia in 2022. Hate speech, including by high-level politicians, often remains unchallenged. This reportedly led to a form of penetration (or as it was noted "trivialisation") of hateful remarks in public life and generated sentiments of marginalisation and exclusion among several segments of the population. However, the capacity of law enforcement agencies to address racism seems to be significantly diminished by the lack of trust in them. In this context, ECRI also touched upon such serious problem as underreporting of hate incidents by law enforcement agencies. ECRI also noted the remaining problem of racial profiling by law enforcement officials that impacts especially the Roma community and people of African descent. ECRI also notes that a high number of hate incidents have been reported in the area of sports, where antisemitic and anti-Black symbols, chants and comments have been used by fans against athletes and supporters of other teams.<sup>30</sup>

The Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of Italy published in January 2025 paid attention to numerous violations of human rights.<sup>31</sup> In the context of racial manifestations, several problems were revealed, including the necessity to eradicate discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities, migrants. For this purpose, Italian authorities are recommended to intensify efforts to eliminate inequality in access to public services, healthcare, education, employment and housing for vulnerable groups and indigenous people. Considerable attention was also paid to the situation of migrants in the country. Among other things, it was pointed out that the draft law on security being elaborated by Italian legislators restricts the rights of migrants and foreigners from certain countries (it mainly concerns persons from the Middle East and Northern

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30 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Italy (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 2 July 2024, published on 22 October 2024. <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-ecri-report-on-italy/1680b205f5>

31 Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. Italy A/HRC/59/4. January 2025.

Africa).

In the Council of Europe report published in May 2025 on racial profiling by police, it is noted that this issue is the most acute in Italy and France where "stop-and-search practices by law enforcement officials – based on national or ethnic background, skin colour, religion or citizenship – are frequently used".<sup>32</sup>

Italy saw a sharp rise in antisemitism following the outbreak of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in October 2023. According to the 2024 report of the Observatory on antisemitism of the Contemporary Jewish Documentation Center<sup>33</sup>, in 2023, 454 cases were identified as antisemitic incidents (241 in 2022), including one assault and 40 cases of threats. There were 259 online hate speech incidents. The chief editor of the report, Italian sociologist Betti Guetta said that "antisemitism today is much more aggressive and less hidden at the same time. Insulting Jews is no longer a taboo in Italy. The ongoing conflict in Gaza is used as a shield to insult, without the need to provide any justification." The research has shown that 10 per cent of Italians explicitly express their antisemitism, along with a large grey area of anti-Jewish prejudices.

Italian Minister of Interior Matteo Piantedosi commenting on the current situation in January 2024 acknowledged that "the number of antisemitic incidents had considerably grown".<sup>34</sup> He spoke, in particular, about antisemitic inscriptions on walls and public insults. He said that the law enforcement agencies had identified 42 persons who had committed such acts. One of such cases – a new graffiti "Death for the Jews" appeared on 15 May 2024 in different areas of Procida (Campania).

The FRA's survey on antisemitism conducted among representatives of Jewish communities of a number of EU countries notes that 65 per cent of respondents in Italy consider public hatred against the Jewish a problem.

32 [www.coe.int/it/web/portal/-/anti-racism-commission-racial-profiling-by-police-segregation-of-roma-pupils-and-transphobia-among-key-challenges](https://www.coe.int/it/web/portal/-/anti-racism-commission-racial-profiling-by-police-segregation-of-roma-pupils-and-transphobia-among-key-challenges)

33 <https://moked.it/blog/2024/02/09/osservatorio-antisemitismo-offendere-gli-ebrei-non-e-piu-tabu/>

34 [https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/cronaca/2024/01/09/piantedosi-dal-7-ottobre-135-episodi-di-antisemitismo\\_3e268e64-290f-435a-ba81-17f30dfb3703.html](https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/cronaca/2024/01/09/piantedosi-dal-7-ottobre-135-episodi-di-antisemitismo_3e268e64-290f-435a-ba81-17f30dfb3703.html)



Moreover, Italy has the highest percentage of those who had encountered the stereotype that the Jewish were holding power and control over finance, media, politics and economy. Italy has also a high percentage of respondents who faced incitement to violence against the Jewish (68 per cent) and persons who consider manifestation of antisemitism in sports a serious problem (43 per cent). 70 per cent of Italian respondents reported having encountered antisemitism on the Internet, while 89 per cent remained unhappy about the way the online platforms had responded to their complaints regarding antisemitism. The aggravation of the conflict between Palestine and Israel in October 2023 contributed to a wide spread of the comparison of Israel's politics with the Nazi politics. According to the surveys, images of swastika were disseminated in the country. However, Italy belongs to the countries with the smallest number of respondents avoiding to visit Jewish festivities (21 per cent).<sup>35</sup>

Such antisemitism manifestations had been reported earlier as well. According to a report published in May 2024 by the Eurispes Institute of Social and Political Studies,<sup>36</sup> 14.1 per cent of Italian citizens in 2020 deny Holocaust. 15.9 per cent of respondents say that the persecution of Jews resulted in "not many casualties." 24.1 per cent of respondents consider the cases of antisemitism to be a provocation or just "a joke".

These data correlate with numbers provided by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. In its overview of antisemitic incidents recorded in the European Union FRA cites statistics of the Italian Observatory for Security against Acts of Discrimination, which also show a rise in detected antisemitic incidents in Italy based on the investigations carried out by the State police and the Carabinieri: 91 in 2019, 101 in 2020 and 2021, and 94 in 2022. The most common offences of this kind were incitement to violence (79 cases in 2021 and 81 in 2022), acts of

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35 EU Survey of Jewish People's Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism. Survey of the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights. 2024. [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2024-experiences-perceptions-antisemitism-survey\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2024-experiences-perceptions-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf)

36 <https://eurispes.eu/news/eurispes-risultati-del-rapporto-italia-2025/>

vandalism (22 in 2021, 9 in 2022), and defacing Jewish-owned properties (5 cases in 2021, 29 in 2022).<sup>37</sup>

Unofficial data show an even higher number of antisemitic incidents. The same Observatory for Security against Acts of Discrimination recorded 235 manifestations of antisemitism in 2023, 241 incidents in 2022, 226 in 2021, 230 in 2020, and 251 in 2019.

Notable differences in the number of such incidents for 2010-2018 and 2019-2022 are attributed to different methods of counting. However, this shift does not affect the identification of a general trend in the manifestations of antisemitism in Italy: even in the first period, an increase in the number of documented antisemitic offences is recorded, from 16 in 2010 to 56 in 2018, with a maximum of 64 in 2014.<sup>38</sup>

The increase in manifestations of antisemitism is also indicated by the above-mentioned "Tolerance Map" study, which analyses publications on social networks.<sup>39</sup>

In 2023, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFCNM) functioning within the Council of Europe, indicated that hate speech in political discourse and the media is frequent in Italy. The committee also expressed concern that expressions of hatred against individuals based on their religious affiliation frequently overlap with those based on their ethnic origin. Notably, out of the 224 antisemitic incidents that were recorded in 2020, 117 were linked to hate speech disseminated over Internet or social media platforms. An additional portion of incidents comprised of derogatory posters, graffiti and inscriptions. The report also stated hate speech and hate crimes targeting Muslim communities, encompassing activities by right-wing radical groups and affiliated movements during protests against temporary facilities

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37 Overview of antisemitic incidents recorded on the European Union. 2012-2022.

[http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2023-antisemitism-update-2012-2022\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-antisemitism-update-2012-2022_en.pdf)

38 Overview of antisemitic incidents recorded on the European Union. 2011-2021.

[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2022-antisemitism-overview-2011-2021\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-antisemitism-overview-2011-2021_en.pdf)

39 <http://www.voxdiritti.it/nuovi-dati-della-mappa-dellintolleranza-in-4-mesi-cresce-lantisemitismo/>

accommodating Muslim worshippers (often migrants) or politicians criticizing Islam. Furthermore, there exists an inclination to underreport hate crimes against Muslims. In addition, the ACFCNM pointed out that in 2018-2019, there have been incidents of insults and physical attacks on migration centres fuelled by political statements targeting migrants and refugees.<sup>40</sup>

The UN human rights treaty bodies have a rather balanced approach to dealing with the migration situation in Italy. At the same time, the need is constantly pointed out to ensure the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, improve living conditions in migrant primary registration centres, migrant reception centres, as well as specialized "crisis centres" and centres for unaccompanied children, and to stop the practice of holding migrants in detention for more than 48 hours. Recently, however, the problem has reached such proportions that international monitoring mechanisms have been forced to pay close attention to it. The UN Human Rights Committee<sup>41</sup>, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child<sup>42</sup>, the UN Committee against Torture<sup>43</sup>, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (in 2016<sup>44</sup> and 2023<sup>45</sup>), as well as the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in 2015<sup>46</sup> and 2022<sup>47</sup>), as

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40 Fifth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Italy. Adopted on 5 October 2022, published on 13 February 2023. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-italy-en/1680aa21a7>

41 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Italy. March 2017. [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en)

42 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> periodic reports of Italy. February 2019.

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en)

43 Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the combined 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> periodic reports of Italy. November 2017.

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en)

44 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> periodic reports of Italy. December 2016.

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f19-20&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f19-20&Lang=en)

45 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the 21<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Italy. August 2023.

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=en)

46 Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 5<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Italy. September 2015.

well as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2024<sup>48</sup> have highlighted the situation with migrants. In particular, in its Concluding observations on the periodic report of Italy on the compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of October 2022, the CESCR expressed concern that Act No. 132 of 1 December 2018, on immigration and citizenship, had contributed to a rise in the number of irregular migrants in the country, which in turn had increased their risk of exploitation. In addition, the Committee pointed out that there were attacks on journalists and human rights defenders advocating for or supporting migrants.

The increase of the number of migrants caused a growth of anti-immigrant rhetoric in Italian political discussions, which was noted with concern by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in 2016<sup>49</sup> and 2024<sup>50</sup>. In its last report ECRI noted, in particular, that negative stereotypes about migrants used by politicians created serious obstacles to the effective social integration of migrants, and endangers the activities of non-governmental organizations providing support to migrants. It is also noted that undue criticism targeting individual judges dealing with migration cases also puts the independence of the judiciary at risk. ECRI also touched upon the issue of bullying and discrimination of migrant children in Italian schools. Due to this unhealthy atmosphere, they finish educational institutions earlier than Italian children and even simply drop out school.

In 2023, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

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[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fITA%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fITA%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en)

47 Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Italy. October 2022.

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCESCR%2fCOC%2fITA%2f50522&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCESCR%2fCOC%2fITA%2f50522&Lang=en)

48 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 8<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Italy. February 2024.

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f8&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f8&Lang=en)

49 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Italy (fifth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 18 March 2016, published on 17 June 2016. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-italy/16808b5837>

50 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Italy (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 2 July 2024, published on 22 October 2024. <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-ecri-report-on-italy/1680b205f5>

expressed concern about Law 132/2018 of 1 December 2018 on immigration and security and the Law 50/2023 of 6 May 2023 adopted after the accident of a ship carrying migrants, near the shore of Cutro on 23 February 2023. The latter included a number of legislative measures aimed at regulating legal migration and combating the smuggling of migrants and was named Cutro Law (meanwhile a number of provisions of the law were positively assessed in the 2024 FRA report).

However, according to CERD estimates, this legislative measure made it difficult for migrants and refugees to obtain the necessary protection from the Italian authorities. These included the difficulties faced by migrants and asylum-seekers in the refugee status determination procedure, and abuses by the Italian police and border control authorities. CERD also noted the deplorable conditions of stay in migrant reception centres and the continuing reduction in the provision of psychological, legal and counselling services to migrants. The sharp decline in the granting of "special protection status" to migrants by authorized bodies and cases of collective expulsions of migrants were highlighted. Particular attention was also paid to the widespread practice of detaining migrants in special centres for prolonged periods, including prohibiting migrants from leaving the centres. In addition, CERD expressed concern about the legal restrictions imposed by the Italian authorities on search and rescue operations at sea and the pressure, including criminal prosecution, exerted on human rights defenders and civil society organizations for assisting migrants at sea.<sup>51</sup>

It is indicative that in its follow-up letter to the examination of the information sent by the Italian authorities on this issue after the penultimate round of the Italian dossier in 2018, CERD specifically requested that Italy's next periodic report include information on measures to protect the rights of migrants,

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51 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the 21<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Italy. August 2023.

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FITA%2FCO%2F21-22&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FITA%2FCO%2F21-22&Lang=en)

as well as on the situation of Roma.<sup>52</sup>

The problems faced by migrants in Italy were regularly highlighted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. In 2022 report<sup>53</sup> FRA noted the inadequate conditions in the initial-reception facilities for migrants (inter alia, on the island of Pantelleria), the lack of information on the possibility of lodging an asylum application, the use of immigration detention, as well as cases of push-backs in violation of the principle of non-refoulement.<sup>54</sup>

The EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights also highlighted the limitations of NGOs' work in assisting migrants in its 2023 report, noting that only 16 per cent of all migrants are brought to the country's ports as a result of these rescue operations. In the first half of 2023, only 4.2 per cent of migrants were brought by NGO's vessels.<sup>55</sup> At the end of 2022, only three NGO-owned vessels and one aircraft were carrying out search and rescue operations, while five vessels were blocked pending legal proceedings and several others were temporarily in port for maintenance. An example is also given of two ships, the Ocean Viking and Humanity 1, which in October 2022 were refused permission by the Italian authorities to disembark migrants rescued at sea in Italian ports for an extended period of time. After a three-week wait, the Ocean Viking was diverted to the French port of Toulon, where it disembarked the people on board, while the Humanity 1 was allowed to dock at the port of Catania after a two-week wait. As of January 2023, a new decree by the Italian authorities introduced additional restrictive provisions relating to maritime rescue operations.<sup>56</sup> In 2023, four vessels

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52 Follow-up letter from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the results of Italy's follow-up report, dated 17 May 2018. CERD/95thsession/FU/AR/ks

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/ITA/INT\\_CERD\\_FUL\\_ITA\\_31253\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/ITA/INT_CERD_FUL_ITA_31253_E.pdf)

53 The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf)

54 This term refers to a situation where a person is apprehended after crossing the border illegally and is expeditiously returned to a neighbouring country without taking into account their motives for crossing the border.

55 The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Fundamental Rights Report 2024.

[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2024-fundamental-rights-report-2024\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2024-fundamental-rights-report-2024_en.pdf)

56 The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Fundamental Rights Report 2023.

[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023\\_en\\_1.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf)

were subjected to fines and detained again.<sup>57</sup>

The 2024 FRA report indicates new violations of the rights of this category of persons, namely, the unlawful detention of Tunisian nationals in Lampedusa, their inhuman treatment in the assessment centre and their collective expulsion<sup>58</sup>, as well as detention of minor and adult migrants in one premise.

Concerns were raised in February 2023 by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk during the consideration of draft legislative amendments that aim to restrict search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea. The proposed amendments include mandatory ports of disembarkation for people rescued at sea, which can sometimes be days away from the original rescue site. Humanitarian rescue vessels will also be required to return to port immediately after each rescue, forgoing additional rescue operations. Türk called the proposed document a "fatal disaster at sea". He stated that the document could potentially impose penalties on both migrants and those who offer them assistance. Moreover, the document may result in a rise in fatalities in maritime disaster incidents<sup>59</sup>. Volker Türk also touched upon the migration issue during his speech in the Italian Senate's Extraordinary Committee for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. He noted Italy's extensive use of detention, for long periods, of migrants and asylum-seekers, and their restriction to so-called "hotspot" facilities without clear legal basis.<sup>60</sup>

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled for the first time in 2022 on a complaint concerning an incorrect assessment by the Italian authorities of the age of migrants (the case *Darboe and Camara v. Italy*, which concerned a minor Gambian national and a minor Guinean national who were placed in a reception centre together with adult migrants. These persons had applied for

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57 The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Fundamental Rights Report 2024.

[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2024-fundamental-rights-report-2024\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2024-fundamental-rights-report-2024_en.pdf)

58 The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Fundamental Rights Report 2024.

[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2024-fundamental-rights-report-2024\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2024-fundamental-rights-report-2024_en.pdf)

59 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/italy-proposed-new-sea-rescue-law-puts-more-lives-risk-turk>

60 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/01/we-need-stand-firm-promise-human-rights-turk-tells-italian-senate>

asylum as unaccompanied children).<sup>61</sup>

The problems of the migrants from African and Asian countries engaged in agriculture, production of clothes and logistics in Italy drew the attention of the experts of the UN Working Group on business and human rights following their visit in 2021. In this context, numerous migrant workers were reported to be experiencing brutal working and living conditions, alongside grave health and safety issues.<sup>62</sup> The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights highlighted the same issue in October 2022. It noted that the migration problem was worsened by the significant informal economy, which hired numerous workers without labour and social security entitlements. Italian authorities adopt a punitive stance towards these workers. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination highlighted this issue in August 2023. It was reported that a considerable number of migrants, primarily seasonal workers in the agricultural sector, were victims of violence and exploitation in Italy.<sup>63</sup> This issue was also touched upon by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in February 2024.

There is no term "national minorities" in the basic Italian law. Constitutional lawyers explain this by the fact that "language, and not nationality or ethnicity, is the defining instrument for identifying foreign and multilingual communities in need of protection". Common rules governing language policy in the country are contained in the 1999 Law concerning the Provisions on the protection of the historical linguistic minorities. Twelve linguistic minorities (2.5 million people living in 14 regions of the country), which have developed as ethnic communities within their linguistic areas, are recognized at the state level. However, the law

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61 The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Fundamental Rights Report 2023.

[http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023\\_en\\_1.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf)

62 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2021/10/statement-end-visit-italy-united-nations-working-group-business-and-human-rights?LangID=E&NewsID=27607>

63 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the 21<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Italy. August 2023.

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FITA%2FCO%2F21-22&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FITA%2FCO%2F21-22&Lang=en)



only mentions those ethnic groups that have historically lived in the territories of present-day Italy. In this regard, the rights of numerous Roma groups living in Italy (this group includes the Roma and Sinti communities, as well as the Camminanti, an ethnic group living mainly in the south of Sicily) are effectively ignored, which has repeatedly led to criticism of Rome by multilateral universal and regional human rights monitoring bodies.

Italy highlights the full range of problems that Roma generally face. Much of it is related to the fact that existing Roma settlements in the country are generally illegal buildings on the outskirts of towns and cities. These areas are criminalized, and drug trafficking often flourishes there. Law enforcement agencies regularly raid places where Roma live, and illegal buildings are periodically demolished. Italy recorded one of the highest numbers of Roma displaced from their homes in the EU (15 per cent).<sup>64</sup>

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2015 and 2022), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2016 and 2023), the Human Rights Committee (2017) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) drew attention to the importance of addressing the situation of the Roma, including in housing, access to social services and education, and the labour market. In October 2022, the CESCR noted that Roma continued to face segregation, with most living in settlements without any infrastructure, and discrimination against Roma children in education. In August 2023, CERD referred to the segregation of Roma children in educational institutions and, more generally, to discrimination against Roma in the provision of health services. In February 2024, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about high drop-out rates among Roma girls and noted that Roma women and girls, as well as women and girls among refugees and migrants continue to face discrimination and obstacles while accessing to

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<sup>64</sup> The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report "Roma in 10 European countries", 2022. [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2022-roma-survey-2021-main-results\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-roma-survey-2021-main-results_en.pdf)

education.<sup>65</sup>

At the same time, FRA explained that, in general, Italy's level of segregation of Roma children in schools is not as high as in a number of other EU countries and is below 15 per cent. The Agency also noted the average level of enrolment of Roma children in education in general. However, it is indicated that the greatest differences between the Roma and the mainstream population are observed in the field of preschool education, as only 30 per cent of Roma children attend kindergartens. However, according to FRA, about half of all Roma children attending Italian schools face bullying and violence from their classmates.<sup>66</sup>

The latest survey by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights on the situation of Roma in the European Union shows that anti-Romani sentiment in Italy is quite high: 40 per cent of those surveyed had experienced hate-motivated aggression in the past year, and one in ten members of the Roma community had been physically attacked for the same reasons. No significant gender-based differences were observed, however, differences based on age were recorded: the highest rate of incidents was found among Roma aged 25-44 (17 per cent), followed by respondents aged 45-64 (6 per cent) and 16-24 (4 per cent).<sup>67</sup>

Discrimination against Roma, including the use of offensive language and names in relation to them, was also highlighted by the ACFCNM.<sup>68</sup>

In 2024, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) pointed to a number of problems faced by the Roma in Italy. In particular, the Commission mentioned that many Roma still resided in formal and informal settlements, which often lacked basic amenities and were located in city outskirts with limited access to public transportation. Moreover, forced evictions of Roma in

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66 The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report "Roma in 10 European countries", 2022. [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2022-roma-survey-2021-main-results\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-roma-survey-2021-main-results_en.pdf)

67 Ibid.

68 Fifth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Italy. Adopted on 5 October 2022. Published on 13 February 2023. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-italy-en/1680aa21a7>

violation of international standards have continued.<sup>69</sup>

The living conditions of prisoners in Italian prisons, which often pose a threat to their health and life, raise serious concerns. In December 2024, the Observatory on Human Rights published information on torture and inhuman treatment of prisoners in the prison of Trapani, over dozen penitentiary police officers of the prison are suspected to perpetrate these abuses.<sup>70</sup> As for 31 December 2024, 60,637 people were detained in prisons, with a nominal capacity of 51,347 people.

There have been cases of death of Russian citizens in Italian prisons. On 4 July 2020, Russian citizen A. Nosenko committed suicide in the Sergio Cosmai prison in Cosenza (Calabria region). This is in line with the negative trends observed by human rights defenders in Italian penitentiary institutions. In 2023, 68 prisoners committed suicide in places of detention (85 prisoners in 2022), 88 prisoners in 2024. In total, about 1.8 thousand attempts of suicide were recorded. There is often no investigation into these cases.

The living conditions of prisoners in Italian prisons, which often pose a threat to their health and life, raise serious concerns. This problem concerns, inter alia, people of Russian descent. On 9 May 2023, Russian citizen V. Pereshchako died of cardiac arrest in the penitentiary institution of Augusta (Sicily). He had been on hunger strike due to the Italian authorities' failure to fulfill his request to transfer him to the Russian Federation to further serve his sentence.

Russian citizen A. Volkov, who was detained in the Italian capital in August 2023 on an extradition request to the United States, was literally held in inhumane conditions in a Rome prison.<sup>71</sup> Due to the lack of a table in his cell, he and two cellmates had to use a chair to eat for three months, sitting on the floor.

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69 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Italy (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 2 July 2024, published on 22 October 2024. <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-ecri-report-on-italy/1680b205f5>

70 Osservatoriodiritti.it/2024/12/18/violenza-in-carcere-trapani/

71 See the relevant section of the report on human rights situations in certain countries by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation for a review of the deplorable state of affairs in the US prison system.

The temperature in the room dropped to 12 degrees Celsius at night because the prison authorities did not turn on the heating. Medical examinations and treatment were superficial, and most chronic diseases of Russians went unrecorded. Following persistent requests from the Russian Embassy, the Ombudsman for Prisoners' Rights in Italy conducted an inspection of the A. Volkov's cell, confirming all the reported facts, as well as the concerning mental and general state of health of the Russian citizen.

A manifestation of xenophobia with a political (and in the context of relevant international documents – racist) background is alarming – large-scale discrimination against Russian citizens and compatriots, which became widespread in the first half of 2022 against the backdrop of the Ukrainian crisis.

In early 2022, Russophobia manifested itself sharply in Italy amid the special military operation in Ukraine for denazification and demilitarization and the protection of the civilian population of Donbass conducted by the Russian Federation. This mass hysteria had a significant impact on Russian citizens and Russian-speaking people from the former Soviet republics living in the Apennines. Russophobia manifested itself the most sharply from February to April 2022. The Russian Embassy and consular offices regularly received messages from compatriots on threats against them. Aggression towards representatives of Russia and Russian diaspora come mostly from radicals of the big Ukrainian diaspora in Italy, one of the largest in Europe, with the connivance of the Italian authorities.

Since the end of February 2022, Russian citizens have been discriminated by major banks refusing to service cards and open new accounts. They had limited access to medical care. Students undertaking an education in Italy (as a rule, they have come here in the framework of exchange programmes), found themselves under serious pressure; observers estimate that by the end of February 2022 they were about 350 in the Apennines. After blocking of Russian bank services and freezing of accounts they were virtually deprived of their means of subsistence and had either to prematurely terminate their studies and return to Russia or to look for

other ways to earn money.

The campaign against Russian culture and its representatives, launched in Italy, led to a number of ignominious incidents. Thus, on 28 February 2022, mayor of Milan Giuseppe Sala, also head of La Scala Theatre, demanded to the world famous conductor Valery Gergiev to publicly condemn "Russia's actions in Ukraine" under the threat to end cooperation and, in particular, to ban him from participation in the performance of the opera "Queen of Spades" by Piotr Tchaikovsky.<sup>72</sup> Having received no response to the ultimatum, the Milanese authorities announced that the La Scala theatre "refuses further cooperation with the Russian conductor". In February 2023, the mayors of the Italian cities of Brescia and Bergamo (Lombardia region) banned Russian pianist Denis Matsuev from performing at the 60th International Piano Festival. On 23 January 2024 in Rome and on 22 July 2025 in Bologna, a concert of famous Italian pianist of Ukrainian origin Aleksander Romanovsky was cancelled because of his pro-Russian views. On 23 November 2024, at the behest of Pina Picerno, Vice-President of the European Parliament (member of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats), a concert of Russian opera singer Ildar Abdrazakov in San Carlo Theater (Teatro di San Carlo) (Naples) was cancelled.

On 21 July 2025, a concert planned for 27 July with the participation of Valery Gergiev and soloists of the Mariinsky Theater Elena Luferova, Yury Afonkin and Lev Bespalov in the festival "Un'Estate da RE" in the courtyard of Vanvitelli in Caserta (Campania) was cancelled. According to the local news agency Ansa, the management of the Royal Palace in Caserta cancelled the concert because of the disputes about the stance of the orchestra director and possible protests which might have been organized because of his performance. A number of Italian public figures made statements against the performance of universally known Russian orchestra director. Vice-President of the European Parliament Pina Picerno, in particular, called to cancel the concert of Valery Gergiev on her page in

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<sup>72</sup> <https://www.classicalmusicnews.ru/news/la-scala-removed-valery-gergiev-from-queen-of-spades/>

X social network. Italian Minister of Culture Alessandro Giuli also criticised the decision to invite the Russian orchestra director in Caserta. "Art is free and no censorship shall be applied to it. However, propaganda, even if it is done by a talented person, is a different matter", he said. Alessandro Giuli called Gergiev "Putin's friend and advisor".<sup>73</sup> The head of Italian region of Campania that includes Caserta Vincenzo De Luca said that such statements did not contribute to peace.<sup>74</sup>

The concert of Valery Gergiev was cancelled after the Italian media had bullied the great musician disseminating speculations, conjectures and obvious lies about the "special role" of the orchestra director in "Russian propaganda machine", as well as personal insults in his regard. Even a demonstration against the performance of the orchestra director was organized. However, the media note that not many Italians have participated in it, most of the protesters were "representatives of Ukrainian and Georgian diaspora wrapped in the flags of their states".<sup>75</sup>

At the opening of opera season in 2022 in the La Scala Theatre during the performance of Boris Godunov of Modest Musorgsky, President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella said: "Great Russian culture is an integral part of the European culture. This is the element that cannot be cancelled...". President of the Council of Ministers Georgia Meloni noted in this regard that "the relations between Italy and Russia, inter alia, in the area of culture, have been historically solid". Therefore, I supported the decision of the La Scala Theater to open the new season by a Russian performance...".<sup>76</sup>

There are also problems with ensuring media freedom in Italy, in particular as regards the Russian media. According to a decision adopted by the Council of the European Union, the Russian media outlets RT and Sputnik are banned on the territory of the EU starting from 27 February 2022. On 25 June 2024, the decision

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73 <https://lenta.ru/news/2025/07/21/v-italii-otmenili-kontsert-valeriya-gergieva-ego-pytilis-sorvat-ukrainskaya-i-gruzinskaya-diaspory/>

74 <https://ria.ru/20250716/prezident-2029443955.html>

75 <https://iz.ru/1923422/2025-07-20/v-italii-proshel-miting-protiv-kontcerta-dirizhera-iz-rf-gergieva>

76 <https://t.me/ambrusitalia/2992>

adopted by the Council of the European Union to ban other three Russian media outlets (RIA Novosti, Izvestia and Rossiiskaya Gazeta) "any broadcasting activities" on the territory of the EU. This very fact has negatively affected the access of Italian citizens to accurate information. The latter is particularly important in the context of propaganda pressure of the collective West and evident anti-Russian campaign by the Italian media which provides information about events in the world exclusively on the basis of Western or Ukrainian sources, often spreading frank "fakes".

A vivid example of the brutal anti-Russian attacks by the Italian authorities was the statement by Sergio Mattarella who during a lecture in the Marseille University made on 5 February 2025 made blatantly false historical parallels between the Russian Federation and Nazi Germany. The statements of the head of state were refuted by the Italians themselves who in their letters and appeals to the Russian side, in posts on social networks and media heavily criticized Sergio Mattarella. Italian journalist and activist Vincenzo Lorusso, in particular, handed over a petition with apologies on behalf of the Italian people for the statements of President Sergio Mattarella to Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Maria Zakharova on 22 February 2025.<sup>77</sup> As of 11 April 2025, over 35,000 people signed the online petition.<sup>78</sup>

Since the beginning of the Special Military Operation by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population of Donbass, in Italy there is a clear trend of oppression of dissenters and all those who disagree with the government's policy towards our country. Several information campaigns were organized against "Putin's propagandists", to which belonged Italian public figures, inter alia, those who openly did not declare support for Russia, but expressed a common-sense position or criticized the decision to send weapons and military equipment to the Kiev

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<sup>77</sup> <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/23216607>

<sup>78</sup> [https://www.petizioni.com/il\\_popolo\\_italiano\\_prende\\_le\\_distanze\\_dalle\\_parole\\_del\\_presidente\\_mattarella](https://www.petizioni.com/il_popolo_italiano_prende_le_distanze_dalle_parole_del_presidente_mattarella)

regime. Culmination was the publication in 2022 in the central Italian newspapers of "proscriptive lists", which even included several mainstream magazines. "Unreliable" representatives of the expert-analytical and media community were exposed to different forms of pressure, including blocking or closing bank accounts. Thus, the account of TV channel "Vision TV" leader of the Sovereign and Popular Democracy party Francesco Toscano was closed. As a pretext was used the fact that the party publishing company (Visione Editore, 2024) published at the expense of Francesco Toscano a collection of articles "The true reasons of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict", the central material of which was the article by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin "On the historical unity of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples" of 12 June 2021.



## **Federal Republic of Germany**

Attempts to glorify the Nazi movement and its individual representatives in any form are criminalized in Germany. Public denial, justification or underestimation of the seriousness of the crimes of National Socialism, public approval or glorification of Nazi tyranny, distribution of propaganda materials and use of symbols of anti-constitutional organizations, which include Nazi and neo-Nazi (§§ 86, 86a and 130 of the Criminal Code (CC) of Germany) are criminally prosecuted.

At the same time, in recent years, various manifestations of racist ideologies, including neo-Nazism, have been increasingly intensifying. These are accompanied by aggressive Russophobia at the state level and unlimited support for the Kiev regime.

With the beginning of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population in Donbass by the Russian Armed Forces, the German authorities proclaimed a course aimed at inflicting a "strategic defeat" on Russia. This stance has led to a freeze in contacts and cooperation between the state institutions of the two countries and has negatively affected the attitude of German authorities and a society influenced by an artificially inflated Russophobic campaign in the media toward representatives of the Russian-speaking diaspora.

In the context of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, the German official narrative and relevant academic and historical institutions continued to conduct their policy toward revising contemporary history, including downplaying the role of the Red Army and the Soviet people in the defeat of Nazism. Russia was accused of attempting to "instrumentalise" the Great Victory in order to justify the special military operation.

The display of the "Z" and "V" symbols was prohibited in Germany (prosecuted under para. 140 of the German Criminal Code "Encouragement and Approval of Crimes", punishable by up to 3 years' imprisonment). Restrictions

have repeatedly been imposed on the use of Soviet and Russian symbols during events commemorating the anniversaries of Victory in the Great Patriotic War.

For example, in 2025, during military memorial events, the display of the St. George ribbon and the wearing of historical military uniforms were prohibited almost everywhere in Germany.

The most extensive restrictions were imposed in Berlin, where, pursuant to a police order, on 8 and 9 May in the vicinity of Soviet war memorials in Treptower Park, Tiergarten, and Pankow the following were prohibited: wearing military uniforms, their elements, or military insignia; displaying the St. George's Ribbon; displaying flags associated with Russia, the coats of arms of the USSR, Belarus, and the Chechen Republic, as well as images of the heads of the aforementioned states and of the said constituent entity of the Russian Federation; displaying the flags of the USSR, the Republic of Crimea, the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, the Zaporozhye and Kherson Oblasts, Russian and Soviet military banners, images of the territory of Ukraine excluding the Republic of Crimea, the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, and the Zaporozhye and Kherson Oblasts; performing or playing Russian marches and military songs; as well as statements or other forms of conduct indicating approval of the Russian special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population of Donbass.

The colours of the Russian flag and the St. George's Ribbon were allowed only as elements of the design of wreaths, bouquets, etc., intended for placing on monuments or graves. The above-mentioned restrictions did not apply to diplomatic delegations and to veterans of the Great Patriotic War.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> [https://www.berlin.de/polizei/\\_assets/polizeimeldungen/av-russisch.pdf?ts=1746192003](https://www.berlin.de/polizei/_assets/polizeimeldungen/av-russisch.pdf?ts=1746192003)



<https://www.mknews.de/social/2024/01/23/germaniya-akt-vandalizma-v-mire-evropeyskoy-demokratii.html>

Since the start of the special military operation, there has been a sharp increase in the desecration and vandalism of Russian (Soviet) military cemeteries and memorials in Germany. While in 2021, the Representation of the Russian Ministry of Defense's Department for Commemorating the Memory of Those Who Died Defending the Motherland at the Russian Embassy in Germany recorded three such incidents, in 2022 there were 16, in 2023 – 12, in 2024 – 18, and from January to May 2025 – four cases.

Particularly alarming is the changing attitude toward historical memory in Germany.



*Children who were prisoners of the Nazi concentration camp Majdanek. Their blood was taken for transfusions to wounded German officers.*

*Photo by RIA News <https://rg.ru/2023/07/19/pamiati-vseh-zhertv-holokosta.html>*

40 per cent of German citizens who took part in a representative survey conducted by the "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" Foundation stated that they first encountered the concept of National Socialism at school, while only eight per cent learned about Germany's Nazi past within their families. Only a third of those surveyed were able to give an approximate explanation of what was meant by the term 'euthanasia of the sick' in the context of the Nazi era. Three quarters of those surveyed proved unable to give a realistic estimate of the number of victims, including the number of Roma or forced labourers killed. Only 20 per cent of respondents agreed that the prosperity of many families in Germany is connected with the crimes of the Nazi era (more than 40 per cent rejected this statement). An even smaller share supported the corresponding assertion with regard to their own families (10 per cent). Twenty-five percent of respondents believe that the prosperity of many German enterprises is based on their development during the Third Reich (57 per cent deny this view).



*Photo by A. Shaikhet. Freed prisoners of the concentration camp. 1945.*  
<https://russiainphoto.ru/exhibitions/727/#36>

The study notes the superficial knowledge of the Nazi era among the population of Germany. It concludes that the significant gaps in knowledge are linked to a lack of readiness and willingness to engage in its critical reflection. Forty-two percent of respondents emphasized the importance of preserving the memory of Nazi crimes. Almost as many respondents (38 per cent) believe that it is time to "draw a line" under the era of National Socialism. At the same time, 43.6 per cent of those surveyed think it is "better to devote oneself to current issues" rather than studying the events of the past.

Middle-aged Germans are more likely to agree with the idea of "drawing a line" on the issue of preserving the culture of memory of World War II. Young and elderly people, as well as citizens with higher education, are more likely to oppose such a statement.





*A group of Jews, including a young boy, is being led out of the Warsaw Ghetto under the escort of German soldiers. The photograph was taken on 19 April 1943. It was part of a report by SS General Jürgen Stroop to his command and was presented as evidence of Nazi atrocities during the Nuremberg Trials in 1945.*

<https://fishki.net/anti/91762-vtoraja-mirovaja-vojna-holokost-45-foto.html>

Approximately 50 per cent of those surveyed are irritated by the fact that Germans are still being reproached for crimes against Jews (less than a third disagrees with this statement). Forty-five per cent of respondents consider showing solidarity with Jews in Germany to be a "personal responsibility" (more than half either reject this or are undecided). Forty per cent of respondents do not support the view that the Germany has "special obligations" towards Israel (28.5 per cent share this view).



*A Ukrainian Jew being shot by a German soldier during a mass execution of local residents in Vinnitsa, Ukraine, approximately between 1941 and 1943. This photograph, titled "The Last Jew in Vinnitsa" (this was the exact inscription on the back of the photograph), was found in a photo album belonging to a German soldier.*

<https://fishki.net/anti/91762-vtoraja-mirovaja-vojna-holokost-45-foto.html>

Referring to the survey results, experts conclude that for an increasing number of German citizens, National Socialism is "one of the historical eras" that no longer has any connection with the present.



<https://fishki.net/1240360-uzhasy-blokadnogo-lenigrada.html>

At the state level, the country still acknowledges its historical responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi regime. At the same time, many actions of German authorities call into question their commitment to preserving the historical truth about the World War II.



<https://fishki.net/1240360-uzhasy-blokadnogo-lenigrada.html>



For example, Germany maintains double standards with regard to the payment of individual compensations to those who survived the siege of Leningrad, which was one of the most horrific acts of genocide perpetrated by Nazi Germany against the peoples of the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War. More than 1,000,000 Leningrad residents of various nationalities have fallen prey to this genocide. Berlin makes payments only to Jewish survivors of the Siege of Leningrad, citing contrived pretexts. The German authorities have refused for years to extend payments to the remaining survivors of the blockade, to the defenders and residents of the city.



<https://fishki.net/1240360-uzhasy-blokadnogo-leningrada.html>

On 28 February 2024, the Russian side sent a note to the German Foreign Ministry, officially raising the issue of recognising the Siege of Leningrad and other crimes against the peoples of the USSR during World War II as genocide,

and also reaffirmed its position on the need to extend German individual payments to all surviving siege survivors.



<https://fishki.net/1240360-uzhasy-blokadnogo-lenigrada.html>

In its reply note dated 26 April 2024, the German Foreign Ministry stated that Berlin's legal assessment of the Siege of Leningrad by German occupation forces and their allies in 1941–1944 solely as a war crime remains unchanged. Referring to the USSR's refusal to receive reparations in 1953, demands for the payment of corresponding compensation to all survivors of the siege, regardless of nationality, were also rejected.

At the same time, the German authorities have for decades been paying social benefits to former servicemen of the Third Reich (and their widowed or orphaned close relatives) who served in SS units and other militarised structures

recognised as criminal, as well as to foreign collaborators of the Nazi regime, including those directly involved in the Siege of Leningrad.

The payments are governed by the Federal War Victims Compensation Act (Bundesversorgungsgesetz) of 1 October 1950. According to the regulation, regular or one-time payments can be claimed by military personnel, including foreigners, who suffered health damage (at least 30 per cent impairment) during World War II due to military or equivalent service, captivity, or internment abroad, as well as civilians affected by hostilities. Social assistance also extends to the closest relatives of victims (spouses, children, parents).

According to data from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Germany, as of December 2023, nearly 50,000 people were receiving these monthly social payments under the status of "war victims," including 29,500 individuals directly affected by hostilities and 17,400 of their relatives. Of these, 766 recipients resided outside Germany (404 "victims" and 362 relatives), including both Germans who had relocated to other countries and citizens of respective states who were former Nazi collaborators. The largest numbers of such recipients lived in Poland (116), the USA (82), Austria (61), Canada (43), Croatia (35), Bosnia and Herzegovina (32), Switzerland (26), and Spain (22).<sup>80</sup>

The case of an 80-year-old former Nazi SS officer Heinz Barth is illustrative. He had been serving a life sentence in a German prison for his role in the massacre of hundreds of civilians in the French town of Oradour in June 1944. After the German reunification in 1990, he became eligible for a monthly payment of 450 USD on the grounds that he had lost a leg in the war.<sup>81</sup>

In early April 2025, it was reported that a confidential "instruction" was sent by the German Foreign Ministry to regional and municipal authorities, as well as memorial complexes, regarding planned events dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. The document advised organizers of such

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<sup>80</sup> <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Soziales/Soziale-Entschaedigung/Zahlen-und-Daten/zahlen-und-daten.html>

<sup>81</sup> Nazi war criminal dies in Germany. BBC. 14 August 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6946159.stm>

events not to invite official representatives of Russia and Belarus and effectively allowed for their expulsion in case of "uncoordinated" appearances.<sup>82</sup> The administrations of the memorials at the former Buchenwald, Mittelbau-Dora and Dachau concentration camps informed the Russian Embassy that it would not be inviting its representatives to the official commemorative events in 2025.



*Photo: Angelika Warmuth / Reuters.*

*<https://lenta.ru/comments/news/2025/05/09/s-venkov-u-memoriala-dachau-srezali-rossiyskie-i-belorusskie-lenty/>*

A striking example of the desecration of the memory of the victims of the Nazi regime was the action of the Dachau memorial administration, under whose orders ribbons in the colours of the Russian and Belarusian national flags were cut from wreaths laid by delegations of the two states at the memorial to Soviet prisoners of war on 6 May 2025. The administration justified its actions by

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<sup>82</sup> <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/politik-gesellschaft/geopolitik/80-jahre-kriegsende-auswaertiges-amt-will-keine-vertreter-aus-russland-bei-gedenkfeier-li.2313544>

claiming that the Russian and Belarusian delegations had "violated" the ban imposed by the memorial authorities on the use of the national symbols of both states.<sup>83</sup>

Attempts to appropriate the immortal heroism and countless sacrifices of Soviet citizens by "national compartments" did not cease. There was a persistent attempt to promote the thesis that the victory over Nazism did not bring genuine liberation to the peoples of Europe. The official discourse continued to ignore Russia's calls to recognise the crimes of the Third Reich and its collaborators as genocide against the peoples of the Soviet Union.

The fact that the German delegation votes against the draft resolution on "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", which the Russian Federation, together with other co-sponsors, submits every year to the United Nations General Assembly, is yet another indicator of the real attitude of the German authorities towards the inadmissibility of the rehabilitation of Nazism. In 2022-2024, Germany, along with its former allies in the World War II, namely Italy and Japan, voted against the draft resolution. This stance marked the first time that former Axis member states opposed a document condemning the glorification of Nazism and various forms of racial discrimination. In previous years, the German delegation abstained, in line with the collective EU policy.<sup>84</sup>

Far-right extremist ideology, including neo-Nazism and aggressive nationalism, which has been intensifying in recent years, continues to be regarded by German authorities as one of the most serious threats to the country's internal security. The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz; BfV) has identified over 40,000 individuals in the country

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83 <https://tass.ru/politika/20260873>

84 [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/un/organs/general\\_assembly/79\\_ya\\_sessiya\\_generalnoy\\_assamblei\\_oon/1988097/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/un/organs/general_assembly/79_ya_sessiya_generalnoy_assamblei_oon/1988097/)

holding far-right extremist views, of whom approximately 14,500 are considered prone to violence.<sup>85</sup>

There are several right-wing political parties in Germany. The largest of these is the Fatherland ("Die Heimat", known as the National Democratic Party of Germany until 2023), which has existed since 1964 and has about 3,000 members. Other right-wing extremist parties – the Right Wing, Third Way, Free Saxons – are not numerous (500-700 members each), but they actively participate in organization of mass events with corresponding slogans, and conduct aggressive nationalist propaganda on the Internet.<sup>86</sup>

On 24 May 2024, the German newspaper Bild reported via its Telegram channel that dozens of young people attended a party at the elite resort island of Sylt in the village of Kampen, where they were heard chanting Nazi slogans. The incident has sparked a scandal in Germany.<sup>87</sup> The party took place at "Pony" bar on Strenway Street, which attracted around 500 guests that evening. The establishment is known as a popular hangout for children of television stars, celebrities, and business executives. The cover charge at this venue is 150 EUR.



<https://iz.ru/1701504/2024-05-24/v-frg-razrazilsia-skandal-posle-vecherinki-s-nacistskimi-lozungami>

<sup>85</sup> Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat. Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023.

[https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutzberichte/2024-06-18-verfassungsschutzbericht-2023.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=17](https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutzberichte/2024-06-18-verfassungsschutzbericht-2023.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=17)

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> <https://iz.ru/1701504/2024-05-24/v-frg-razrazilsia-skandal-posle-vecherinki-s-nacistskimi-lozungami>



The young attendees filmed themselves dancing while chanting the Nazi slogan "Germany for Germans – foreigners out!". Video evidence shows one guest even formed a Hitler-style toothbrush moustache with two fingers and performed a Nazi salute.<sup>88</sup> As a result of the investigation, no one was punished: the judges ruled that the utterances in question "constitute an evaluative judgment" and are protected under freedom of expression.

In addition to political parties, right-wing circles organize their activities through other organizations and movements registered as legal entities or existing on an informal basis. These include, in particular, the Identitarian Movement (Identitäre Bewegung), the Citizens' Movement for Chemnitz (Bürgerbewegung Pro Chemnitz), neo-Nazi "free comradeships", and self-styled "civil defence units".

German law enforcement bodies point to a decrease in the influence of registered ultra-right parties and organizations in favour of informal, non-permanent structures without a common leader, emerging inter alia on the Internet, which makes monitoring by law enforcement agencies more difficult.<sup>89</sup>

This principle was used in particular by the "Group C" which was unravelled in February 2020 (its members planned terrorist attacks against Muslims and political figures), the right-wing extremist organization Combat 18, which was banned by the German Ministry of the Interior in January 2020, and local cells of the international neo-Nazi groups "Blood and Honour"<sup>90</sup> and "Atomwaffen Division".<sup>91</sup>

In recent years, youth far-right extremist groups positioning themselves as "trendy" subcultures have been gaining popularity: Jung und Stark ("Young and Strong"), Deutsche Jugend Voran ("German Youth Forward"), Elbrevolte ("Elbe

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88 <https://iz.ru/1701504/2024-05-24/v-frg-razrazilsia-skandal-posle-vecherinki-s-nacistskimi-lozungami>

89 Ibid.

90 Rechtsextremes Netzwerk vor Gericht. Tagesschau. 8 April 2022. <https://www.tagesschau.de/investigativ/ndr-wdr/prozess-blood-honour-101.html>

91 Atomwaffen Division und Combat 18. ZEIT. ZEIT. <https://www.zeit.de/politik/2022-04/atomwaffen-division-und-combat-18>

Uprising"), Nationalrevolutionäre Jugend ("National-Revolutionary Youth"), and others.<sup>92</sup>

The ultra-right forces are closely joined by "citizens of the Reich" – revisionists who do not recognize the legitimacy of the Federal Republic of Germany and its authorities and consider themselves citizens of the German Empire in its pre-war borders. Their number has been increasing and is currently estimated at about 25,000 people. More than 2,500 of them are considered to be prone to violence.<sup>93</sup> The growing radicalization of this environment and its readiness to open conflicts with the authorities is observed. On 7 December 2022, during a large-scale special police operation, the activities of Reichsbürger, who according to investigators were planning an attempted armed coup d'état, were suppressed (25 people were detained).<sup>94</sup> In April–May 2024, trials began against alleged conspirators on charges of participating in a terrorist organisation and preparing an act of treason.<sup>95</sup>

Mass right-wing extremist and xenophobic events are regularly held in Germany. Among the largest of such events are demonstrations in Dresden on the anniversary of the bombing of the city by British and American aircraft on 13-15 February 1945.

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92 <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/134/2013463.pdf>

93 [https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutzberichte/2024-06-18-verfassungsschutzbericht-2023.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=17](https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutzberichte/2024-06-18-verfassungsschutzbericht-2023.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=17)

94 <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/hintergruende/DE/reichsbuerger-und-selbstverwalter/exekutivmassnahmen-gegen-reichsbuerger-spektrum.html>

95 <https://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/niedersachsen/Reichsbuerger-Drei-Verfahren-gegen-Prinz-Reuss-Gruppe,reichsbuerger516.html>





*A march of far-right radicals during the anniversary of the 1945 bombings of Dresden by U.S. and British allied forces, Dresden. 15 February 2025.*

*<https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/speaker-addresses-the-assembly-of-people-outside-dresden-news-photo/2199839804>*

On 15 February 2025, marking the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dresden bombings, approximately 2,000 people (compared to about 1,000 in 2024)<sup>96</sup> participated in another such rally chanting revisionist slogans<sup>97</sup>.

On 21 March 2025, a neo-Nazi demonstration titled "For Law and Order" took place in Berlin, attended by around 850 people. The protesters were aggressive, and over 80 individuals were detained for disturbing public order, attacking police officers, and displaying Nazi symbols.<sup>98</sup> Right-wing forces regularly organize protests against accommodation of asylum-seekers, gathering up to several hundred participants, primarily in the eastern states of Germany.<sup>99</sup> According to the German Ministry of the Interior, about 316 right-wing large-scale events took place in the country in 2024.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/sachsen/dresden/dresden-radebeul/demo-protest-gedenken-bombardierung-neonazis-100.html>

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/sachsen/dresden/dresden-radebeul/bombardierung-rechtsextremisten-polizei-demo-ermittlungen-100.html>; <https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/sachsen/dresden/dresden-radebeul/ticker-protest-demo-zerstoerung-bomben-rechtsextreme-104.html>; <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/23153095>

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2025-03/berlin-demonstration-neonazi-rechtsextremismus-friedrichshain>

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.rnd.de/politik/rechtsextreme-machen-wieder-gegen-fluechtlingsunterkuenfte-mobil-MOSR4IA3CRDQRHTNLDD5KXXH3Q.html>

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.fr.de/politik/die-rechten-marschieren-auf-93529984.html>

The German law enforcement community reports close interaction between local neo-Nazi circles, "citizens of the Reich" (Reichsbürger), COVID dissidents groups, and various "conspiracy theories" supporters.

According to the Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), which cited a police spokesperson, on 29 March 2025, the far-right group "Third Way" held a demonstration in Berlin's Hellersdorf district. Approximately 250 supporters of far-right ideology participated in the event. Several counter-demonstrations took place simultaneously.<sup>101</sup>

A statement from the Berlin police spokesperson, published on the official X account of the Berlin police, indicated that far-right radicals from across Germany and even Denmark attended the demonstration. Some participants performed the banned Nazi salute, and several individuals were detained. There were also public order violations among those protesting against the far-right groups. A total of 20 arrests were made.

After the event concluded, clashes occurred between far-right radicals and the police. The radicals threw bottles at law enforcement officers, two police officers were injured.

A week earlier, on 22 March 2025, similar demonstrations and counter-protests took place in several German cities, including Berlin, Dresden, Frankfurt am Main, Hanover, Munich, Nuremberg, and Schwerin.<sup>102</sup>

The scale of the integration of right-wing extremist elements into law enforcement agencies is significant. According to the second special report of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior on this topic, published in May 2022, from July 2018 to June 2021, vetting of law enforcement agencies staff (police, special services, Bundeswehr, customs) was carried out 860 times on suspicion of having right-wing extremist views or views close to those of Reichsbürger. In 327 cases the suspicions were confirmed. Over 450 criminal cases on incitement of ethnic

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101 <https://ria.ru/20250329/berlin-2008169817.html>

102 <https://ria.ru/20250329/berlin-2008169817.html>

hatred, use of symbols and propaganda of anti-constitutional organizations and others were opened.<sup>103</sup>

A specialized report published in December 2020 by the Bundestag Parliamentary Oversight Panel (which oversees the activities of law enforcement agencies) pointed out that right-wing radicals in the police, special services, and Bundeswehr maintain close ties to right-wing extremist parties, movements, and groups.<sup>104</sup>

In the German armed forces, the most problematic unit in terms of right-wing extremist sentiments is the KSK Special Forces, one of whose companies was disbanded in July 2020 for this reason.

The German police have repeatedly been rocked by scandals involving dozens of their officers participating in electronic chat groups where photographs of Hitler, swastikas, and photomontages depicting the shooting of Black people, etc., were shared. Officers from the federal states of Hesse, Baden-Württemberg, and Bavaria were found to have participated in extremist chat groups in 2018–2019.<sup>105</sup> Officers from Berlin and North Rhine-Westphalia also participated in such chats in 2020.<sup>106</sup>

The Internet plays a significant role in the spread of right-wing extremist ideology in Germany. The far-right actively uses the opportunities provided for by popular social networks to propagandize and mobilize participants in public events. Far-right views are also widespread on so-called image-boards ("4chan", "8chan", etc.) and on platforms for gamers like "Steam", "Discord", etc.<sup>107</sup> Sociological studies have recorded a consistently high level of hate speech against

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103 <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/rechtsextremismus/2022-05-lagebericht-rechtsextremisten-reichsbuerger-und-selbstverwalter-in-sicherheitsbehoerden.pdf>

104 <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/182/1918206.pdf>

105 <https://www.dw.com/ru/pravye-jekstremisty-v-rjadah-policii-frg-vse-nachalos-v-chate/a-54963251>

106 <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/berlin-und-nrw-neue-rassistische-chatgruppen-bei-polizei-entdeckt-16981029.html>

107 <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/19/161/1916170.pdf>

persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities in the German segment of the Internet.<sup>108</sup>

The German Ministry of the Interior recorded 42,800 politically motivated right-wing extremist crimes in 2024 (48 per cent more than in 2023), of which 1,400 were violent crimes. The situation regarding hate-motivated crimes is deteriorating. In 2024, 21,700 such offences were recorded (28 per cent more compared with 2023, of which 1,400 were violent). This category includes 9,300 crimes motivated by hatred of people of foreign origin (34 per cent more than in 2023), 4,600 racially motivated offences (+22 per cent), 1,800 Islamophobic offences (+26 per cent), and 195 anti-Roma offences (+14 per cent).<sup>109</sup> One thousand nine hundred crimes were targeted against refugees and asylum-seekers, 237 of which were violent. Two hundred eighteen torts were targeted against accommodation facilities for them.<sup>110</sup>

Human rights activists are particularly concerned about the growing problem of anti-Semitism in Germany. According to a study by the University of Konstanz, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Education, approximately 17 per cent of German students exhibit anti-Semitic views. Of these, six per cent display overt anti-Semitism, while 11 per cent show a tendency toward it. At the same time, it is encouraging that the majority of students (83 per cent) showed no anti-Semitic attitudes.

However, the authors of the study note that, within the overall population, the level of anti-Semitism is even higher: 20 per cent are explicit and 19 per cent are potential holders of such views.

During the survey, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with statements such as: "Many Jews try to benefit from the history of the Third Reich"

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108 [https://www.idz-jena.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/\\_Hass\\_im\\_Netz\\_-\\_Der\\_schleichende\\_Angriff.pdf](https://www.idz-jena.de/fileadmin/user_upload/_Hass_im_Netz_-_Der_schleichende_Angriff.pdf)

109 <https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/UnsereAufgaben/Deliktsbereiche/PMK/2022PMKFallzahlen.pdf>

110 <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2025-02/gefluechtetenunterkunft-anschlaege-anstieg-straftaten-2024>

or "What the State of Israel is doing to the Palestinians today is, in principle, no different from what the Nazis did to the Jews in the Third Reich."

70 per cent of respondents condemned the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023, describing it as a "repulsive act of terrorism." At the same time, the number of those critical of Israel's military response to the attack is growing. 65 per cent of students believe that it "will primarily lead to immeasurable suffering for civilians" (in 2024, 58 per cent held this view).

One-third of university administrators who participated in the study reported anti-Semitic incidents following 7 October 2023.<sup>111</sup>

Since October 2023, against the backdrop of the escalation in the Middle East and unbalanced pro-Israeli policy of the German Foreign Ministry, Germany has seen a dramatic increase in crime on this basis. While 2,600 anti-Semitic offences were recorded in 2022, the number rose to over 5,600 in 2023 and 6,200 in 2024 (a record high).<sup>112</sup>

The German Ministry of the Interior points to a significant increase in anti-Semitic crime motivated by religious and foreign extremist ideology.<sup>113</sup>

In this context, the comments of Felix Klein, Germany's Federal Government Commissioner for the Fight Against Anti-Semitism, are telling. In an interview with Rheinische Post, he stated that "Jewish life in Germany today is under greater threat than at any time since the Holocaust." According to him, anti-Semitic crimes have "reached a terrifyingly high level and, strangely enough, are increasingly becoming 'normal'." "Hate against Jews is evident across all segments of society," Klein clarified, linking this situation to Israel's attacks on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.<sup>114</sup> Describing the high level of hate-motivated crime as

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111 <https://www.ntv.ru/novosti/2777954/>

112 <https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/UnsereAufgaben/Deliktsbereiche/PMK/2022PMKFallzahlen.pdf>

113 <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article251435984/Judenhass-in-Deutschland-Neue-Dimension-erreicht-Antisemitische-Straftaten-auf-Hoechststand.html>

114 <https://easaily.com/ru/news/2025/02/07/zhizn-evreev-pod-ugrozoy-v-2024-g-v-frg-6000-prestupleniy-na-pochve-antisemitizma>

"shameful" for the country, Felix Klein noted the insufficient attention paid to the problem by German society.

Josef Schuster, the President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, pointed out that because of fears for their safety, many members of his people living in Germany have stopped wearing Jewish religious symbols in public.<sup>115</sup>

At the same time it is recognized that police statistics represent the "tip of the iceberg" and do not take into account a variety of "domestic" incidents that are not prosecuted. The group of specialized NGOs called the Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Anti-Semitism (RIAS) documented a record of 8,600 complaints from victims in 2024, 77 per cent more than in 2023 (4,800 complaints).<sup>116</sup> Anti-Semitism at German universities has intensified. Jewish students are often forced to refrain from attending classes due to concerns for their safety.<sup>117</sup> According to the specialized survey published in April 2025, 40 per cent of German universities reported anti-Semitic incidents on their campuses since October 2023.<sup>118</sup>

According to the German National Centre for Combating Discrimination, in 2024, of the 11,400 registered complaints, 3,800, or 43 per cent, were related to discrimination on ethnic or racial grounds.<sup>119</sup> Meanwhile, anti-migrant sentiments are widespread in the German society. According to the results of a YouGov survey published at the end of December 2022, in recent years, German citizens' attitude towards migrants has been negative: two-thirds of respondents see nothing positive in the permanent reception of refugees.<sup>120</sup>

After the start of the special military operation, there was a sharp surge in cases of discrimination, insults, threats and direct violence against Russian-

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<sup>115</sup> <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/gesellschaft/missbrauchsstudie-104.html>

<sup>116</sup> [https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/04-06-25\\_RIAS\\_Bund\\_Jahresbericht\\_2024.pdf](https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/04-06-25_RIAS_Bund_Jahresbericht_2024.pdf)

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.rbb24.de/politik/beitrag/2023/11/israel-kritik-antisemitismus-hochschulen-berlin-studenten.html>

<sup>118</sup> <https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/deutschland/anti-israelische-proteste-deutschland-israel-100.html>

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/Jahresberichte/2022.pdf?>

<sup>120</sup> Deutsche sind besonders skeptisch gegenüber Flüchtlingen und Asyl. WELT. 26 December 2022.

<https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/plus242857561/Umfrage-zu-Asyl-Deutsche-im-internationalen-Vergleich-besonders-skeptisch.html>

speaking citizens. According to the German Federal Criminal Police Office, at its height in spring of 2022, there were up to 200 criminal offenses motivated by Russophobia per week.<sup>121</sup>

It should be noted that the sharply increased discrimination after the start of Russian special military operation was directed against all representatives of the Russian-speaking diaspora, including Jews and Russian Germans from among the late resettlers, who are also citizens of Germany.

Since the end of February 2022, there have been numerous incidents of various kinds, including those beyond the bounds of the law and involving violence: the use of physical force, threats, insults, deliberate damage to the property of Russian-speaking individuals, denial of services, including medical and banking services, unlawful dismissals from employment, coercion into public acts of contrition and condemnation of the actions of the Russian authorities, etc.

Psychological harassment and persecution of Russian-speaking children in schools – by both classmates and teachers – has become widespread. Many schools hold classes where teachers, following centralized instructions, assign homework which discredit Russia. Russian-speaking children who refuse to attend such classes and complete assignments are threatened with expulsion from school.

Both German human rights activists and the police recognized the facts of discrimination against Russian-speaking residents of Germany, i.e. the entire community of German residents for whom Russian is their native language or one of the main means of communication, as well as against citizens of Russia and Belarus.<sup>122</sup>

The German human rights organisation VADAR reported that between June 2022 and the beginning of September 2023, approximately 1,600 Russian-speaking residents of Germany encountered discrimination on ethnic grounds. Over 400 of

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121 BKA registriert Dutzende Delikte: Angriffe auf Russen und Ukrainer in Deutschland. N-TV. 19 April 2022. <https://n-tv.de/politik/Angriffe-auf-Russen-und-Ukrainer-in-Deutschland-article23275758.html>

122 Wegen Angriffskrieg gegen die Ukraine. Anfeindungen gegen Deutsche aus Russland: So bekommen Betroffene Hilfe. SWR. 09.03.2022. SWR. 09.03.2022. <https://www.swr.de/swraktuell/baden-wuerttemberg/diskriminierung-deutsche-aus-russland-100.html>

the appeals received by the organisation were processed on a priority basis, with more than 100 of these cases receiving specific legal support. In 2023 alone, VADAR received around 700 appeals. According to the organisation's head, Ulrich Oehme, a particular problem for Russian-speaking residents has been the blocking of bank accounts and the confiscation of cars registered in Russia.<sup>123</sup>

The Russian Embassy in Berlin actively receives feedback from Russian compatriots in order to collect information about cases of discrimination and harassment of Russian-speaking people, as well as to respond promptly to their concerns about such incidents. The Embassy records and systematises the information received about violations of the rights of Russian-speaking citizens in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The wave of Russophobia manifested itself also in the cultural and religious areas. A campaign to force Russian cultural figures to publicly condemn the actions of the Russian leadership was launched in Germany. This was followed by demonstrative refusals to cooperate with Russian cultural figures and institutions, as well as attempts to eliminate works by Russian authors from programmes.

In March 2022, there were attacks on and desecration of Russian Orthodox churches of the Moscow Patriarchate in Düsseldorf, Essen, and Krefeld and of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in Hanover, Berlin, and Bielefeld.

The German authorities are putting pressure on and intimidating those activists of the Russian-speaking community who openly express their disagreement with the ongoing demonization of Russia in Germany. The German media publish articles claiming that such activists are under the control of the Kremlin, accusing them of the alleged ties to extremists.

A striking example of the persecution of Russian citizens in Germany is the criminal proceedings initiated by the German authorities against the pro-Russian activist Yelena Kolbasnikova, who has lived in the country for many years, and her

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<sup>123</sup> "Blind Law": Over 1,600 Russian nationals faced discrimination in Germany within a year. Izvestia. 4 September 2023. <https://iz.ru/1567626/semn-boikov/slepoi-zakon-za-god-v-frg-podverglis-diskriminacii-16-tys-rossian>



husband Maxim Schlund. They are known for their active participation in the organization of several pro-Russian automobile rallies in Germany. Following a criminal case against Yelena Kolbasnikova, the Cologne District Court found her guilty and fined her with 900 euros for her statements in support of Russia on 8 May 2022 during the Victory Day event in June 2023. At the same time, she was charged with "war propaganda" under Article 140 of the German Criminal Code for publicly supporting Russia's "aggression against Ukraine".

In addition, Yelena Kolbasnikova and Maxim Shlund were investigated on suspicion of violating the Foreign Trade and Payments Act of the Federal Republic of Germany, which prohibits the export and transfer of goods subject to EU sanctions (the maximum penalty under this law is up to five years in prison). In particular, according to the investigators, they handed over insulated tents, helmets, cash, etc. to the Russian military during a trip to Donbass in the fall of 2022. As part of this investigation, the apartments of Yelena Kolbasnikova and Maxim Shlund were searched on 27 March and 21 August 2023.<sup>124</sup>

Due to persecution by the German authorities, Yelena Kolbasnikova and Maxim Shlund were forced to leave Germany in May 2024. In July 2024, the German authorities issued an order for the activists' expulsion from Germany with a 20-year entry ban, justifying it by the need to prevent threats to national security and public order.

At the end of May 2025, on the initiative of the German General Prosecutor's Office searches were conducted in Berlin and Brandenburg at the offices and homes of Liane K. and Klaus K. who work in the German public

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124 The trial of Yelena Kolbasnikova, accused of war propaganda, began in Germany. Fund for the Support and Protection of the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad. 10 March 2023. [https://pravfond.ru/press-tsentr/v-germanii-nachalsya-sudebnyy-protsess-nad-rossiyan-kolbasnikovoy-obvinyayemoy-v-propagande/?sphrase\\_id=3344](https://pravfond.ru/press-tsentr/v-germanii-nachalsya-sudebnyy-protsess-nad-rossiyan-kolbasnikovoy-obvinyayemoy-v-propagande/?sphrase_id=3344); Apartments of the organiser of large-scale pro-Russian rallies in Germany were searched. RIA Novosti, 27 March 2023. <https://ria.ru/20230327/obysk-1861092501.html>; A pro-Russian activist fined in Germany. Lenta.RU. Lenta.RU., 7 June 2023. <https://lenta.ru/news/2023/06/07/germany/>; A court in Cologne sentenced pro-Russian activist Yelena Kolbasnikova. Fund for the Support and Protection of the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad. 7 June 2023. [https://pravfond.ru/press-tsentr/sud-kyelna-vynes-prigovor-prorossiyskoy-aktivistke-elene-kolbasnikovoy/?sphrase\\_id=3344](https://pravfond.ru/press-tsentr/sud-kyelna-vynes-prigovor-prorossiyskoy-aktivistke-elene-kolbasnikovoy/?sphrase_id=3344)

association "Peace Bridge – Aid for War Victims", which for many years had organised the delivery of humanitarian supplies to Donbass. The search and arrest warrants were issued on the basis of suspicion of supporting foreign terrorist organisations, and the German General Prosecutor's Office considers the DPR and LPR to be foreign terrorist organisations.<sup>125</sup> The arrest did not take place as the suspects were outside the territory of Germany.

A Russophobic narrative can be discerned in the intensified attempts, through mainstream German media, to discredit the movement of Russian compatriots by smearing its most prominent leaders, thereby aiming to split and intimidate the Russian diaspora. As part of a "journalistic investigation" published in May 2025, the weekly magazine "Der Spiegel" portrays Yuri Y., the head of the "Russkoye Pole" (Russian Field) internet portal for compatriots, as a "secret assistant to the Russian special services". The source of the information allegedly was a hacked email of the "Foundation for the Support and Protection of the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad". An assessment by the German Foreign Ministry is quoted, claiming that the Foundation allegedly serves to spread propaganda and disinformation.<sup>126</sup>

Among the cases of persecution of Russian citizens by the German authorities, the cases against V.A. Dekanov, A. Gevorkov, Y.Y. Orekhov, Y.S. Prokhorova, and M.V. Gatzemeyer should be mentioned. The majority of these cases were related to their pro-Russian publications on social media.<sup>127</sup>

In addition to cases of criminal prosecution, a significant number of incidents involving the seizure of motor vehicles from citizens of the Russian Federation residing in Germany (including in Bavaria, Berlin, Hamburg, and Schleswig-Holstein) or transiting through the country were recorded in 2023. The

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125 <https://www.tagesschau.de/investigativ/verdacht-terrorfinanzierung-friedensbruecke-russland-100.html>. Published on 28.05.2025, 19:09.

126 <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/russland-spionage-in-deutschland-die-heimlichen-helfer-russischer-geheimdienste-a-471274a1-7cc4-4604-806a-518419316b17>.

127 Report of the Russian MFA on Violations of the Rights of Russian Citizens and Compatriots Abroad. [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/doklady/1988380/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/doklady/1988380/)

vehicles were registered in Russia and temporarily imported into Germany. They were seized under Council Regulation (EU) No. 833/2014 of 31 July 2014. Article 31 of this document establishes a ban on the import of a number of cargoes and goods from Russia to the territory of EU countries, including personal cars, telephones, computers, bags, clothes, cosmetics, hygiene products, etc.

In response to the Russian Embassy's notes on the invalidity and illegality of the German authorities' actions, the German Foreign Ministry noted that the possibility of exemption from the sanctions regime is being considered by the competent customs and judicial authorities on a case-by-case basis.

At the same time, the German side points out that the judicial authorities are guided by the legislation in force and are independent in the interpretation of legal norms. Thus, the German federal government indicated that it has no leverage in deciding on individual specific cases involving the confiscation of property of Russian citizens.

Local law enforcement agencies are actively taking measures to combat Russian "propaganda and disinformation," which Moscow allegedly uses to "divide and sow discord" in German society. The broadcasting and access to online resources of many leading Russian media outlets, such as RT DE, SNA News, Channel One, VGTRK, RIA Novosti, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Izvestia, and others, have been blocked in Germany in accordance with EU sanctions.<sup>128</sup> In 2023, the foreign broadcaster SNA News decided to completely cease broadcasting in Germany and shut down its German-language news resources.

The most aggressive pressure was exerted on the German-language channel RT DE. A consistently toxic atmosphere was cultivated around him, with local media repeatedly circulating unfounded insinuations about his alleged bias and lack of impartiality. In May 2021, its bank accounts were closed, and financial services were terminated without explanation. Under pressure from Berlin, the Luxembourg authorities refused to grant the TV channel a license to broadcast in

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<sup>128</sup> Former Sputnik Deutschland.

Europe. The climax of the campaign was the announcement voiced by representatives of the German intelligence agencies that they were officially "monitoring" the activities of RT DE.<sup>129</sup>

At the end of October 2024, the Russian video agency Ruptly closed its headquarters in Berlin, having faced significant pressure from socio-political and media circles since early 2022. For instance, German special services repeatedly claimed that the Ruptly contributes to the spread of Russian propaganda and disinformation aimed at influencing public opinion, undermining democratic discourse, eroding public trust in democratic processes, and weakening social cohesion. German migration authorities stopped issuing visas to new foreign employees of Ruptly and refused to extend previously granted residence permits, citing the need to "counter the spread of Russian disinformation and propaganda." The German media mainstream launched a broad campaign to discredit its successful competitor. Citing anonymous testimonies from former employees, it claimed that Ruptly's materials allegedly pose an undeniable threat to Germany and the EU, as they predominantly cover protest movements and anti-government actions, such as demonstrations against the supply of European weapons to the Kiev regime.

Recently, Germany has seen an alarming trend of increased pressure on employees of Russian state media officially accredited as foreign correspondents. They were suspected of engaging in "malicious activities" aimed at weakening and destabilizing the situation in Germany and the EU as a whole, deliberately spreading "disinformation and pro-Kremlin propaganda," and attempting to divide and sow discord in German society.

Conditions for the safe living and work have been further worsening: their legal status has deteriorated due to actions by local authorities (e.g., refusal to extend residence permits), financial assets are frozen, requests to open accounts,

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<sup>129</sup> <https://www.wiwo.de/unternehmen/dienstleister/sanktionen-kremltreue-medienagentur-ruptly-meldet-insolvenz-an/30059858.html>

provide banking services and grant interviews and comments are denied. Entry visas for their new colleagues are also denied. In addition, they face the ongoing aggressive defamation in the public sphere, which creates an aura of "toxicity" around them, etc. Moreover, these negative trends led, in particular, to the expulsion from the country of correspondents of Channel One who worked in Berlin – Ivan Blagoy and Dmitry Volkov – under the pretext that they pose a "threat to national security and public interests."<sup>130</sup>

At the end of May 2025, the Berlin authorities did not extend the residence permit for Russian journalist Sergey Feoktistov, head of the representative office of the media group "Rossiya Segodnya" in Germany, ordering him to leave Germany by 19 August. On 10 June 2025, German police conducted a search of Sergey Feoktistov's apartment and confiscated the passports of his family members – his wife and seven-year-old daughter – citing concerns that the journalist's family members might allegedly abscond and fail to comply with the order to leave the country in a timely manner. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the German Ambassador in Moscow, Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, of retaliatory measures for the persecution of Russian journalists.<sup>131</sup>

The most high-profile offense against Russian journalists and their families was the discovery of a homemade explosive device in the basement of a residential complex housing the apartments and workspaces of journalists from the Rossiya Segodnya media agency on 6 May 2022. Later, German law enforcement authorities established that the device was planted by a local pro-Ukrainian activist.<sup>132</sup>

Religious centres providing social support to ship crew members in major German ports on a charitable basis are concerned that from February to May 2025, representatives of the police (performing border guard functions in the seaports of

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<sup>130</sup> <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/27/11/2024/6746bf429a794743ab76667e>

<sup>131</sup> [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/2032915/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/2032915/); <https://lenta.ru/news/2025/06/19/v-mid-poobeschali-otvetit-na-presledovanie-rossiyskogo-zhurnalista-v-frg/>

<sup>132</sup> <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/ria-novosti-berlin-steglitz-101.html>

Lübeck, Kiel, Rendsburg, and Brunsbüttel (Schleswig-Holstein state) repeatedly and without explanation denied crew members of ships with Russian citizenship the right to free shore leave while the vessels were in port. This violates the 1965 Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic, to which Germany is a signatory.

In Lübeck alone, the restrictions affected more than 100 Russian seafarers; in Brunsbüttel – 16 seafarers, including the captain of one of the vessels. In Rendsburg, the restrictions impacted the crews of 16 ships.

During a government press conference on 7 July 2025, an official representative of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, evaded answering the relevant question and redirected it to the police. In response to an enquiry from the "Junge Welt" ("Youth World") newspaper, the Schleswig-Holstein state police authority confirmed the denial of unrestricted shore leave to 13 Russian seafarers in the ports of Brunsbüttel and Lübeck. It justified this with provisions of the Schengen Borders Code and the case law of the European Court of Justice. It was stated that the current security situation requires thorough vetting of each shore leave request and that the denials are not widespread but are issued on an exceptional, case-by-case basis.

According to experts, the state police are interpreting their authority broadly, as such actions constitute a direct violation of the aforementioned 1965 Convention, as well as the additional protocols to it that entered into force in 2018, which prohibit discrimination against ship crew members in the right to shore leave on the basis of nationality. Possible exceptions are applicable only if there are compelling reasons pertaining to national security, which require a comprehensive background check of a specific citizen. Furthermore, the crew member undergoing such a check, as well as the ship's captain, must be informed of the results in writing.

Germany continues to rank first in the EU in the number of foreign nationals who are asylum seekers. However, a recent trend shows a decrease in their influx

into the country. According to statistics from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 229,700 initial applications for asylum were filed in Germany in 2024, which is 30 per cent less than the 2023 figure (329,100). The leading countries of origin for applicants were Syria (76,700 initial applications), Afghanistan (34,100), and Turkey (29,100). They were followed by Iraq (7,800), Somalia (6,900), and Iran (5,200).<sup>133</sup> Citizens of the Russian Federation filed 4,698 applications for asylum. Refugees from Ukraine are not included in this statistics, as their admission is carried out under a special EU procedure that exempts them from the need to apply for asylum. According to available data, over 1,100,000 Ukrainian refugees have been registered in Germany.<sup>134</sup>

On 27 February 2024, a law to improve the deportation of foreigners from Germany came into effect.<sup>135</sup> Among the innovations were an increase in the maximum period of placement of deportees in places of compulsory detention before expulsion from 10 to 28 days, as well as the cancellation of prior notification of impending deportation (except for families with children under 12 years of age). Police officers are empowered to seize electronic devices in order to identify migrants, as well as to conduct searches in their places of accommodation. The changes have been criticized by human rights defenders. They pointed out to violations of the basic rights of asylum-seekers, including the right to privacy and confidentiality of personal correspondence.<sup>136</sup>

The UN Human Rights Committee noted the restrictions on family reunification due to quotas imposed by the German authorities, the negative practice of deporting migrants without providing individual case assessment procedures, the poor living conditions in migration centres, which are also located

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<sup>133</sup> <https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Meldungen/DE/2025/250109-asylzahlen-dezember-und-gesamtjahr-2024.html?nn=284830>

<sup>134</sup> <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1356654/umfrage/anzahl-ukrainischer-fluechtlinge-in-den-eu-staaten/>

<sup>135</sup> <https://www.recht.bund.de/bgbl/1/2024/54/VO.html>

<sup>136</sup> <https://www.proasyl.de/news/das-gegenteil-von-verbesserungen-das-neue-rueckfuehrungsgesetz-verschlimmert-die-lage/>

in geographically remote areas, limiting access to basic services for those living there.<sup>137</sup>



<https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/migration-deutschland-setzt-aufnahme-von-un-fluechtlingen-vorlaeufig-aus/100119934.html>

Furthermore, CERD, in March 2024, expressed concern at the persistent discrimination against disadvantaged children, including asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children, Roma and other minority children, children with disabilities, and children from socio-economically disadvantaged families.<sup>138</sup>

According to a report by the newspaper Handelsblatt on 8 April 2025 which cited the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, German authorities have frozen the resettlement of individuals requiring special protection under a program run by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>139</sup>

This decision was linked to negotiations on forming a governing coalition between the conservative CDU/CSU bloc and the Social Democratic Party (SPD), during which the tightening of migration policy was also discussed. The parties agreed to conclude existing voluntary refugee admission programs as soon as

<sup>137</sup> Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Germany. November 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/357/48/PDF/G2135748.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>138</sup> Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> periodic reports of the Federal Republic of Germany. September 2022.

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FDEU%2FCO%2F5-6&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FDEU%2FCO%2F5-6&Lang=en)

<sup>139</sup> <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/migration-deutschland-setzt-aufnahme-von-un-fluechtlingen-vorlaeufig-aus/100119934.html>



possible and to refrain from participating in new ones. An exception will be made only for individuals whose procedures are in the final stages.

The UNHCR program allows refugees who have already been granted asylum to enter a third country. The host country has the right to independently determine the number of people and the countries from which they will arrive. Germany committed to accepting 13,100 refugees in 2024 and 2025.

The newspaper Die Welt, citing a confidential European Commission report, stated that for the first time in many years, Germany lost its leading position and dropped to third place in the EU in terms of asylum applications. In the first quarter of 2025, 37,787 applications were filed – 41 per cent fewer than in the same period of 2024. The most attractive country for asylum seekers became France (40,871 applications). Spain found itself in second place (39,318).<sup>140</sup>

The most frequent asylum seekers in Germany were citizens of Syria (24 per cent), Afghanistan (16 per cent), and Turkey (11 per cent).<sup>141</sup>

Human rights activists and representatives of migrant associations point to the widespread "domestic" racism in Germany, which is expressed in discrimination against persons of foreign origin in the labour market, in healthcare, when looking for housing, etc., as well as "institutional" racism in government and administration, including the practice of "racial profiling".<sup>142</sup>

Sociological research confirms that people with migrant backgrounds are disproportionately subjected to police checks. Many respondents complained about racist and Islamophobic remarks by police officers.<sup>143</sup>

According to the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights, although the German authorities claim to have developed and implemented measures to combat

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140 <https://www.welt.de/regionales/hamburg/article255604954/Ukraine-Fluechtlinge-Es-besteht-die-Gefahr-dass-sich-weitere-Menschen-auf-den-Weg-machen.html>

141 <https://www.moscowtimes.ru/2025/04/08/germaniya-ostanovila-priem-bezhentsev-poprogramme-oon-a160442>; <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/7640187>

142 <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/alltagsrassismus-in-deutschland-wenn-der-hass-krank-macht/25295914.html>

143 Studie zum Arbeitsalltag. Wie tickt die Polizei? Tagesschau. 4 April 2023. <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/studie-polizei-101.html>

racial profiling among police officers, such efforts are not systematic, but mostly at the individual level. There is an isolated case of a Dresden administrative court ruling that the detention and search of a Guinean man was unlawful because of his skin colour.<sup>144</sup>

The lack of an independent investigation into a complaint concerning discriminatory control measures by officers of the Federal Police of Germany was criticized by the European Court of Human Rights in its judgment in *Basu v. Germany* of 18 October 2022.<sup>145</sup>

The need to counter extreme right-wing activity was highlighted by multilateral human rights monitoring mechanisms. In March 2020, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) called on Germany to intensify its efforts to prevent and combat right-wing extremism and neo-Nazism, as well as to establish guarantees for the effective prosecution of hate speech in the Internet. ECRI was alarmed by the rise of hate speech, xenophobia and Islamophobia in German public discourse and the rise of violent right-wing extremists. Its report contained recommendations for the creation of a comprehensive system of independent bodies to counter discrimination at both the federal and state levels.<sup>146</sup>

Moreover, the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) expressed concern over the incitement of hatred in Germany, including verbal attacks, publications, and hateful statements in the context of political discussions. A significant number of hate crimes were noted, including violent attacks and the desecration of religious sites. The Committee also criticized the practice of racial profiling in German police operations. The Committee called on Germany to provide training to law enforcement officials to raise their awareness of the need to conduct themselves in

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144 The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Fundamental Rights Report 2023. [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023\\_en\\_1.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf)

145 <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-220007>

146 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Germany (six monitoring cycle). Adopted on 10 December 2019. Published on 17 March 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-report-on-switzerland-sixth-monitoring-cycle-/16809ce4bd>

a manner that does not lead, even unintentionally, to acts of racial profiling, and to monitor the effectiveness of such activities.<sup>147</sup>

The problem of racial profiling in Germany was also brought to the attention of the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) in February 2022. Among such manifestations are references by police officers to the alleged ethnic origin of suspects while registering crimes; investigations based on general suspicions; and cases of police violence against ethnic minorities. The ACFC emphasized, in particular, that in addition to the individual harm caused to victims of discriminatory police treatment, racial profiling stigmatizes groups of people who are already under public suspicion, creates among them a sense of humiliation, injustice and resentment, and results in a direct loss of trust in the police on their part. Minorities who do not trust the police for these reasons, according to the ACFCNM, will be reluctant to turn to law enforcement agencies when they have been victims of racist crimes, which in turn means that such crimes may go unnoticed and unpunished.<sup>148</sup>

In December 2023, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) published the results of its periodic review of Germany's compliance with its obligations in this area. The document expressed concern about the widespread use of racist "hate speech" in the country's public and political discourse, as well as in the German segment of the Internet and social media. It noted a rise in violent crimes motivated by racial hatred. The report highlighted an increase in the number of far-right organizations and groups whose programs are based on an understanding of the nation as an ethnic community and deny the equality of people before the law. The Committee also expressed alarm over reports of racial profiling and excessive use of force by law enforcement

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147 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Germany. November 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/357/48/PDF/G2135748.pdf?OpenElement>  
 148 Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Germany. Adopted on 3 February 2022, published on 14 June 2022. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-germany-en/1680a6e008>

officers against members of ethnic minorities. According to CERD, Germany should legislatively ban racial profiling and establish an independent mechanism to address complaints regarding it.<sup>149</sup>



*Prisoners of the Herero and Nama tribes during the genocide.*

[https://pikabu.ru/story/germaniya\\_zaplatit\\_namibii\\_11\\_mlrd\\_evro\\_za\\_genotsid\\_afrikanskikh\\_plemen\\_v\\_nachale\\_khkh\\_veka\\_8240470](https://pikabu.ru/story/germaniya_zaplatit_namibii_11_mlrd_evro_za_genotsid_afrikanskikh_plemen_v_nachale_khkh_veka_8240470)

Furthermore, Berlin was recommended to provide comprehensive restitution and compensation for damages to the descendants of the victims of the genocide against the Herero and Nama tribes in former German colonies in Africa in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Committee was also concerned by the numerous cases of racial discrimination and racist acts against athletes belonging to ethnic minorities, particularly footballers.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in May 2023 noted with concern the increasing racism against migrants and Roma in

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<sup>149</sup> Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> periodic reports of Germany. December 2023.  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2F2023-26&Lang=ru](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2F2023-26&Lang=ru)

Germany, including by right-wing extremists and police officers. It also noted the continued discrimination against members of these communities (with a focus on women and girls) in all areas of public life, notably education and social security. It recommended that the German authorities take effective measures to combat racism against migrants and Roma, including through police training programmes and awareness-raising campaigns with the media to prevent cross-discrimination.<sup>150</sup>

According to the results of a study published in October 2023 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), which focused on the prevalence of racism in EU member states, 77 per cent of respondents of African descent in Germany reported experiencing racial discrimination over the past five years. 57 per cent stated they had been subjected to "racial profiling" by the police. These are the highest figures in the European Union.<sup>151</sup>

On 25 July 2025, the German Ambassador to Japan, Petra Sigmund, during a tour of Hokkaido – the northernmost prefecture of the country – made remarks casting doubt on Russia's sovereignty over the southern Kuril Islands. In an interview with a correspondent of the Hokkaido Shimbun, the diplomat stated that, in circumstances where Japanese nationals who once lived on territories, which are now part of Russia, had "lost their homeland" and visits to the graves of their ancestors had become "impossible", the organisation of events "at least physically bringing people closer" to the burial sites (meaning the so-called "memorial ceremonies at sea" involving former Japanese residents of the Kurils – ed.) represented "a commendable initiative". In her discussions with Japanese activists, she emphasised "the serious international significance of the Northern Territories issue".<sup>152</sup>

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150 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 9<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Germany. May 2023.

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FDEU%2FCO%2F9&Lang=ru](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FDEU%2FCO%2F9&Lang=ru)

151 [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2023-being-black\\_in\\_the\\_eu\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-being-black_in_the_eu_en.pdf)

152 <https://www.hokkaido-np.co.jp/article/1061080/>

## **Japan**

The course of historical revisionism reverently pursued by the Japanese authorities and their tacit encouragement of nationalist and militarist ideas reveal an uneasy and gradually aggravating situation with countering various forms of intolerance in the country.

Ineffective domestic policies on combating discriminatory attitudes toward country's non-titular ethnicities only add to inter-ethnic tension.

Manifestations of neo-Nazism and glorification of Nazism in Japan are but a natural outcome of Tokyo's consistent efforts to rewrite history. Official ways of interpreting the underlying causes, course and outcomes of World War II increasingly reflect a revanchist shift towards whitewashing the aggressive expansionist policy of militarist Japan in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

The events of those years are often presented as a story of its own, which bears no direct relation to the confrontation between the nations of the anti-Hitler coalition and the Axis powers led by Nazi Germany in the European theatre of hostilities. At the same time, issues related to Japan's tripartite alliance with Hitler and Italian fascists as well as all sorts of military-technical and logistical assistance provided by Japan to Nazi Germany and directed primarily against the USSR, are deliberately hushed down.

These trends are indicative of the desire of those political forces which favour nationalist Shinto ideas – a set of local pagan beliefs based on the concept of the divine origin of the Emperor and the Japanese people – to regain the positions lost after the defeat in World War II.

Close affiliation of the Shinto circles with Japan's ruling elite reflects the extent to which they influence the country's politics. For example, the largest group in Japan's legislature (Diet) is the Shinto parliamentary group, which numbers about 300 members and lobbies for the interests of the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership, a key political organ of the Shintoists. The second largest group (about 280 members) supports the largest right-wing nationalist

organization, the Japan Conference (Nippon Kaigi), which also draws on the Shinto ideology. For many years, there has been a status quo, with up to 75 per cent of Cabinet members, including the current head of government (Shigeru Ishiba) and his predecessor (Fumio Kishida) belonging to one of the two said parliamentary groups.

As acknowledged by Japanese experts, these forces have succeeded in promoting the idea of revising the restrictions imposed on the country after WWII: Through consistent efforts, Shinto conservatives restored the era-based chronology system tied to the reigns the emperors, some of the traditional national holidays of the pre-war period, in particular the birthday of Emperor Hirohito, under whose reign Japan had forged an alliance with Nazi Germany and unleashed a war in the Pacific Ocean.



*Yasukuni Shrine/ Source: (cc) Toshihiro Gamo*

[https://dzen.ru/a/aAWqSZmDBXmrrUkj?utm\\_source=yxnews&utm\\_medium=desktop](https://dzen.ru/a/aAWqSZmDBXmrrUkj?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop)

Notable revanchist manifestations showing disregard for the national interests and feelings of the peoples of neighbouring Asian states that were subjected to Japanese aggression in the 1930s and 1940s, include regular visits paid by members of parliament and government representatives to the Yasukuni Shrine, which honours the memory of all Japanese who died on the battlefield. Since 1978, its lists have included Class A war criminals executed following the sentence of the 1946-1948 Tokyo Tribunal.

Such collective "pilgrimages" of the Japanese political community are usually arranged to coincide with the traditional autumn (October) and spring (April) festivals and the country's annual "memorial day for the end of World War II" on 15 August.

In April 2024, 94 parliamentarians<sup>153</sup> visited the Yasukuni Shrine, including Sanae Takaichi, Yoshitaka Shindo, Minister in charge of Economic Revitalization, Kazuchika Iwata, Deputy Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, and Yoichi Fukazawa, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs. On 15 August 2024, the event was attended by 72 lawmakers, including the above-mentioned Sanae Takaichi and Yoshitaka Shindo.

In April 2025, the notorious shrine was visited by 72 parliamentarians, including two parliamentary vice-ministers: Hiroyuki Togashi (for internal affairs) and Shinji Yoshida (health).

The established practice is that the heads of government refrain from visiting the shrine, first of all to avoid tensions in relations with China and the Republic of Korea, but make their personal regular donations and offerings as leaders of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP; the latest donation was made by Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on 22 April 2025).

There continuity between the Imperial Army (which committed numerous crimes during World War II) and today's Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) is being deliberately highlighted. For instance, JSDF personnel have repeatedly taken

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<sup>153</sup> <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/html/20240423/k10014430371000.html>



collective "tours" of the Yasukuni (May 2023, January 2024) as well as participated in public events that go back to Japan's militarist history of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These latter include giving imperial names to JSDF naval vessels; performing in public military anthems of the war period; using the revanchist term "Greater East Asia war" when referring to the events of the 1930s-1940s; as well as refusing to remove Mitsuru Ueshima's "death poem," which evokes mixed feelings in Okinawa residents, from one of the government web pages (the author is accused of having issued orders that led to numerous civilian deaths during the battle for the island against Americans in 1945).

The said facts alongside Japan's dependence on the US as its key ally, first of all in what pertains to national security, predetermine the Japanese leadership's consistent policy of historical revisionism with a view to "whitewashing" the crimes committed by the Japanese military regime in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This policy is visible, *inter alia*, in numerous "seeping"<sup>154</sup> reports that Shigeru Ishiba's administration is considering the option to abandon the practice of issuing anniversary sincere apology statements on behalf of government for the colonial atrocities during World War II (used to be published every 10 years since 1995) and replace it with a sort of the prime minister's "personal commentary" (scheduled for August 2025).

Likewise indicative in this context is Tokyo's pained reaction to the Joint Statement on the outcomes of the Russian-Chinese top-level talks issued on 8 May 2025 and calling Japan, *inter alia*, to learn the lessons from the inhuman pages of its own history. The next day during his press conference, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi called such wording "ungrounded" and tried to switch public attention to condemning "the PRC's foreign and defence policy" and "Russia's aggression in Ukraine."

The media, with the authorities' tacit approval, regularly publishes disreputable materials containing distorted narratives that the USSR and Hitler's

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154 <https://www.jiji.com/jc/v8?id=202407tenbyo>

Germany are equally responsible for unleashing the war, as well as articles about "the invasion of Poland by Soviet troops" and "armed seizure of the three Baltic states after signing a secret agreement with Berlin."

In January 2021, Israeli Newspaper "The Jerusalem Post" published a joint article by then foreign ministers of Japan and Lithuania, Toshimitsu Motegi and Gabrielius Landsbergis, on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which revealed that the understanding of World War II by the Japanese political ruling class hardly had touch with reality.<sup>155</sup> Likewise telling is the Japanese-Lithuanian "link-up" itself, with Vilnius that glorifies Nazi collaborators trying to impose on Tokyo its leadership in interpreting, or better be said falsifying, the World War II history.

The article claims that the Soviet Union "occupied" Poland and Lithuania and draws unacceptable parallels between the actions of the USSR and the policy of Hitler Germany, which invaded many Eastern European countries. At the same time, the publication, quite predictably, seeks to attenuate the criminal role of Japan in World War II and its alliance with the Nazi regime.

Duplicity shows through in statements of official Tokyo concerning the events of August and September 1945. Thus, next to nothing can be found about the responsibility of the United States for the atomic bombing raids of Hiroshima and Nagasaki either in annual addresses of the Prime Minister and heads of regional administrations during events commemorating anniversaries of the tragedy or in analytical materials on the issue.

And on the contrary, the media pointedly underlines the USSR's entry into the war with Japan, which clearly demonstrates Japan's deep-rooted reluctance to acknowledge the objective outcome of World War II laid down in the UN Charter.

The campaign aimed at distorting history intensified in 2020-2022 in the context of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Manchurian Strategic Offensive Operation, as well as the day of 15 August commemorated in Japan as

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<sup>155</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/commemorating-visas-for-life-on-holocaust-remembrance-day-656802>

the date marking the end of hostilities. Publications in the national media, including major news agencies and newspapers such as "Jiji", "Iomiuri", "Asahi", "Sankei" and "Hokkaido", widely disseminated Japanese interpretations and abounded in biased and ideologically skewed descriptions of those events.

Students' books also look at the war history from the revisionist perspective. Some of them place the account of the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in a subsection vaguely entitled "Atomic Bombings and the Entry of the USSR into the War", which may create a distorted associative pattern. According to national mass media, since 2026, only two out of 11 new general history textbooks planned for use at Japanese senior school mention Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's 1995 statement expressing remorse and sincere apology for the expansionist aggression in Asia during World War II.

In this regard, the results of the work done to approve the school textbooks' content for re-edition and use at senior school beginning from 2023 promulgated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in March 2022 are illustrative. Reportedly, all publishers have fully complied with the government's requirement to "exhaustively cover" in training materials for advanced optional courses in geography and political economy the topic of "ancestral ownership" by Japan of the "Northern Territories" (the Southern Kurils) and the disputed islands of Takeshima/Dokdo and Senkaku/Diaoyu.

At the same time, textbooks on such courses as "The History of Japan", "World History", "History and Geography" and "Social Science", concerning which the Ministry's ideological instructions are still but advisory, have been assessed negatively for the "superficial" presentation of official positions on the territorial issues. The Ministry criticized the "lack" of references to the "continuing illegal occupation" of the Southern Kurils, which is listed among the factors detrimental to Japan's interests and integrity of its foreign policy, allegedly leading

to the "worrisome risks" of a flawed perception of the importance of defending national sovereignty students may develop.<sup>156</sup>

The performed analysis concluded with satisfaction that new editions of textbooks on "History and Geography", "World History" and "Social Science" contained additional passages clearly pointing to Russia's "annexation" of Crimea in 2014. Among other things, they now refer to Moscow's "violation" of international law and deliberate on the Kremlin's attempts to "legitimize the seizure" of the peninsula through "propaganda of a biased historical narrative", based primarily on the fact that Prince Vladimir and his men were baptized in these lands (Chersonesos/Korsun).

Government support for annual events marking "the Day of Northern Territories" on 7 February is also speaking for itself, as they aim to proclaim the "return" of the Southern Kuril Islands "illegally occupied" by the USSR in 1945 as their goal. The central event in a "nation-wide rally," which, beside representatives of civil society organizations and local officials from Hokkaido Prefecture, traditionally features the country's leadership and leaders of opposition parties, parliamentarians and civil activists.<sup>157</sup>



<https://citysakh.ru/news/117389>

<sup>156</sup> <https://www.zenkyokyo.net/%E6%95%99%E7%A7%91%E6%9B%B8%E5%95%8F%E9%A1%8C/2967>  
<sup>157</sup> <https://ria.ru/20230207/kurily-1850203487.html>

Far-right nationalist organizations regularly hold pickets in front of Russian missions demanding the "return of the Northern Territories." They conduct particularly large-scale, noisy and sometimes aggressive actions (involving motorcades carrying provocative propaganda slogans and equipped with loudspeakers) on "important" dates such as 7 February, 9 and 15 August.



<https://russijapansociety.ru/?p=35490>

The mailboxes of the Embassy and Consulates General are flooded with petitions containing the banal set of accusations regarding historical and "island" issues.

Yet another manifestation of the Japanese authorities' line towards the revanchist interpretation of the results of World War II and justification of Tokyo's expansionist militarist policy of those years is a propaganda campaign in government, media and expert communities against Russia and its citizens unprecedented in its Russophobic intensity, which was launched in Japan at the behest of the Kishida administration following the launch by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation of the Special Military Operation (SMO) to denazify and

demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in Donbass on 24 February 2022 (before that, there had been no reported mass violations of the rights of Russians and their discrimination in Japan).

Russophobic rhetoric sharply increased in the Japanese information space, including the media, social networks and blogs. Official authorities have been taking consistent steps to instill in the public opinion the idea that showing complete unanimity with the West in condemning Russia is an imperative.

The Japanese authorities and major media regularly use slogans of "ideological solidarity" and adherence to international law to voice and publish theories questioning the neo-Nazi and anti-Russian nature of the Kiev regime and its years-long crimes against the Russian-speaking population of Donbass.

The public is offered a deliberately distorted picture of events, in which numerous fascist statements and open calls for the genocide of Russians by Ukrainian officials are completely disregarded. Instead, an emotional narrative is planted about the alleged crimes committed by the Russian military after the beginning of the Special Military Operation (particularly notable were the provocation in the town of Bucha, the so-called "shelling" of residential houses, the maternity hospital, the theatre building in Mariupol and other social infrastructure facilities) and about the "resistance to the invader" shown by the Ukrainian armed forces, fighters of the "Azov" nationalist battalion and other similar neo-Nazi formations banned in Russia.

Furthermore, Japan regularly sides with other Western nations when voting on Ukrainian initiatives at the UN General Assembly: on 12 May 2022, it supported the resolution entitled "The deteriorating human rights situation in Ukraine stemming from the Russian aggression"; on 23 February 2023, the resolution on the need "to reach, as soon as possible, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine" in line with the principles of the UN Charter, which "deplored" "the dire human rights and humanitarian consequences of the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine"; on 24 February 2025, a

biased anti-Russian resolution timed to coincide with the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the special military operation to demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine and protect peaceful population of Donbass (SMO) containing unfounded allegations and ultimatums against Russia.

Despite official Tokyo's emphasized promotion of the "human security" concept, it blatantly avoids applying its principles and norms to Ukraine-related events.

In particular, in April 2022, the Japanese side removed the Ukrainian nationalist battalion "Azov" from the list of terrorist organizations contained in its national International Terrorism Situation Review 2021.<sup>158</sup> Thus, for political reasons, it in fact encourages the aforementioned terrorist organization's activities, which is fraught with new threats to the lives and security of Russian citizens. By doing so, Japan has shown itself as an abettor of neo-Nazism, to the detriment of its own security.<sup>159</sup>

Likewise illustrative is the supply to the Armed Forces of Ukraine of military equipment (bullet-proof vests, helmets, etc.) and armoured vehicles (automobiles and transport all-terrain vehicles) from the stockpiles of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces in 2022-2024. According to many local experts, these supplies may constitute a violation of national law prohibiting the provision of military and technical assistance in conflict regions. Furthermore, in October 2024, the Japanese authorities decided to allocate USD 3.3 billion to the Kiev regime as part of the G7 initiative to provide a USD50-billion loan to Ukraine, which is expected to be paid back using the interests on Russia's sovereign assets "frozen" in Western countries.

There have been repeated attempts to exploit the Ukrainian issue to substantiate Tokyo's illegitimate territorial claims to the Southern Kurils: The Japanese media actively instill in their audience's understanding the idea that Russia aims to "solve problems by force," drawing parallels between the "invasion

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158 [https://www.moj.go.jp/EN/psia/20220407\\_oshirase.html](https://www.moj.go.jp/EN/psia/20220407_oshirase.html), <https://www.moj.go.jp/content/001375893.pdf>

159 <https://ria.ru/20220413/yaponiya-1783381205.html>

of Ukraine" (starting with the "annexation of Crimea" in 2014) and the "illegal occupation of the Northern Territories by the Soviet troops" in 1945, and that there is no alternative but to show solidarity with the Zelensky regime in order to achieve progress in the "return" of the Russian islands to Japan. The distortion of facts has achieved an unprecedented level under the wild anti-Russian media campaign launched in the country in February 2022.

Thus, since 2022, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony held annually on 6 August has turned from an event commemorating the victims of the American savagery into a propaganda gathering aimed at denigrating Russia, used by Japanese politicians as a platform to whip up the fake idea of "the nuclear threat coming from Moscow." In 2022 through 2025, the organizers of the ceremony pointedly refused to forward traditional invitations to Russian and Belorussian representatives.

In 2024, the mourning ceremony on the 79<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragedy was attended by Fumio Kishida, members of the government, representatives of international organizations and diplomatic missions of 115 states – a record number of participants for the entire time the ceremony has been held. The Japanese leader, avoiding referring to the US as a state that dropped an atomic bomb on the city, in his welcome address immediately turned to the issue of "the nuclear blackmail by Russia".

An example of direct support for the neo-Nazi ideology is another congress of the so-called "Free Peoples of Post-Russia Forum". It was organized in Tokyo on the parliament premises on 1-2 August 2023 by a Polish NGO, whose activities were recognized undesirable by the Russian Prosecutor General's Office in March 2023 and whose members were included in the Russian roster of extremists and terrorists. Members of the Japanese parliament who attended the event signed the final "document" calling for the elimination of Russian statehood and violation of the territorial integrity of our country. The activists of the "forum" were offered the



floor to disseminate hate speech and open calls for terrorist attacks in the Russian territory.<sup>160</sup>

Against this background, Tokyo's position during the vote at the UN General Assembly on the resolution "On combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" has been predictable. Having abstained over the past years during the vote on this document, which is presented annually by Russia and other co-sponsors, Japan changed its approach in 2022 through 2024 and voted against it.

Such hostile rhetoric, along with the Russophobic propaganda of the Kishida administration affects everyday life of Russian citizens residing in Japan and leads to the violation of their social and economic rights.

Since the beginning of the Special Military Operation, the Russian consular offices have been receiving from compatriots reports of domestic violence in mixed families and ethnic-based harassment at work in Japanese companies (insults, humiliation, denial of employment).

A number of Japanese companies deliberately supported work environment in which their Russian employees could not openly express their opinion on current developments and processes in Russia and abroad for fear of being fired.

One example of the violation of the legal rights and interests of our compatriots is the recent situation when a 17-year-old daughter of a Russian citizen, V.A. Kazantseva, was detained by Japanese social services in Tokyo. Since May 2022, employees of the juvenile centre have prevented face-to-face encounters between mother and teenage daughter, as well as their communication in Russian over the phone.

On 3 March 2022, an illustrative act of vandalism was committed at the Red Square store of Russian goods in Tokyo: An intruder (a US citizen of Ukrainian descent) smashed the sign at the entrance.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> <https://www.sankei.com/article/20230801-SACWFWGPVVKZPNQQIZMBV2TFLA/>

The Russian business community also faces frenzied Russophobic treatment in Japan. After the detainment of a Russian citizen A.S. Sova (born on 29 July 1985) in Osaka on suspicion of violating the law on currency transactions and foreign trade (he allegedly exported jet skis, spare parts and other "prohibited goods" to Russia bypassing sanctions, and, following the proceedings, was sentenced to a three-year suspended imprisonment), local authorities engaged in a new persecution of Russian entrepreneurs Ye.V. Gvaltyuk and O.V. Belyakov (director and employee of GE Trading company) on similar slanted charges (suspected of bypassing anti-Russian "sanctions" and exporting "prohibited goods" to our country). In fact, this led to the termination of activities by a legal entity because of the blocked bank account and other imposed restrictions.

Other alarming examples include attempts by a number of hotels to deny accommodation to Russians (February and March 2022; the incidents were promptly resolved after direct intervention of city administrations), "doubts" publicly expressed by former head of the political council of the opposition Democratic Party for the People, Kohei Otsuka, about the appropriateness to place Russian-language inscriptions on road signs in Northern Hokkaido Prefecture "in light of the situation in Russia" (when faced with accusations of xenophobia from his followers, he hastily deleted the tweet).<sup>162</sup> There was an illustrative attempt to hide Russian-language signs at Tokyo's Ebisu station in April 2022, allegedly following complaints from passengers who had found them inappropriate in the context of the situation in Ukraine (the signs were returned a week later after a wave of criticism against the management of the JR East transportation company).

Discriminatory measures introduced against persons traveling to Belarus and Russia in 2022 at customs checkpoints at Japanese airports have remained in force in 2024 and the first half of 2025.

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<sup>161</sup> <https://sputniknews.jp/20220611/11524339.html>

<sup>162</sup> <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20220520/k00/00m/010/411000c>

For example, it is still prohibited to export "luxury goods" (clothes, shoes, headwear, laptops, pottery, furs, jewellery, watches, perfumes, etc.) that cost more than 40,000 yen (USD 280). Restrictions apply to cash, with up to 100,000 yen (USD 700) allowed .

Special rooms have been set up at border crossing points (airports, seaports), where Russia-bound passengers, regardless of their nationality, prior to check-in are subjected to additional checks for compliance with the illegal restrictive measures imposed by the Japanese government. According to some experts, by acting in this way, the Japanese authorities violate Article 13 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights that proclaims freedom of movement for every citizen.

It should be noted that official Tokyo made certain efforts to curb discrimination against Russians in the Japanese society qualifying such phenomena as "unacceptable and inappropriate", as then Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno and Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi put it.<sup>163</sup>

Attempts to put pressure on Russian missions abroad are quite common: unfriendly and insulting actions, pickets and rallies in front of the Russian Embassy and consular missions are held on a regular basis; Russian missions also receive threats by phone and by mail. Certain difficulties have arisen because a number of management companies refuse to fulfil their contractual obligations or conclude new contracts, referring to "international turmoil."

During the 2022-2024 Russophobic campaign, clearly at the behest of the official authorities, the Japanese political, business and public circles completely halted contacts with the Russian Ambassador in Tokyo. In fact, he found himself in an "information isolation," which hampered the performance of his official duties.

The aforementioned refusals to invite the head of the Russian diplomatic mission to the regular August commemorations of the US atomic bombings of

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<sup>163</sup> <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/04/20/national/yoshimasa-hayashi-russian-discrimination-concerns/>

Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 2022, 2023 and 2024 (for the first time in nearly 50 years) are an outrageous act of protocol discrimination.

Moreover, the Hiroshima authorities in fact desecrated the memory of the victims of the nuclear disaster caused by Americans by throwing away a wreath laid at the city cenotaph by the Russian Ambassador, who visited the city on his own initiative in 2022.

The Russian visa centre located in the Akasaka Ward (Tokyo) have regularly received anonymous threats and demands that our compatriots "get out of Japan."

Similar "messages" have been sent to the Moscow Patriarchate in Tokyo, as well as to the clergy of the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Japan.

In October 2023, an attempt was made to replace the national flag of the Russian Federation with the "protest" one (a blue stripe set against white background, which is banned in our country), on the signboard of the Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU) branch in the city of Hakodate.

As reported by RIA Novosti on 14 June 2024, with reference to the FEFU press service, the university has stopped student admission to its Hakodate branch and is going to wind up its work there. This decision was made after the entities responsible for the issue had considered "the Russian studies an unpromising area" (the experience of the USA, where the shortage of experts on Russia adversely affects the quality of foreign policy expertise, is simply ignored). This has led to a decrease in the number of applicants. The branch staff began to receive threats, and aggressive citizens even broke into the premises of the educational institution.

Despite the ongoing Russophobic campaign in Japan, the number of people wishing to study Russian has not decreased and even increased in certain instances, as acknowledged by major Japanese media with surprise. This can be explained by the fact that with Russia currently being in the media spotlight, public demand for getting information directly from Russian sources is growing.

Russian higher education institutions admit applicants to the master's and postgraduate programs, as well as additional professional training programs in the Russian language, within the quota allocated by the Government of the Russian Federation. Recommendations of the Japanese Foreign Ministry and most universities to avoid traveling to our country, as well as the high cost of air travel that has nearly doubled in view of the illegal anti-Russian restrictions, seriously hamper academic exchanges. In this situation, the distance learning option successfully adopted by many Russian educational institutions is becoming increasingly popular.

Despite the unfavourable environment in which the Russian diplomatic mission in Japan operates, it manages to hold traditional war commemorative events: official ceremonies at the monument to Hero of the Soviet Union Richard Sorge (wreath-laying on 23 February, 9 May and 7 November) with participation of diplomats and representatives of embassies of friendly nations and compatriots; thematic exhibition "Alley of Glory" featuring photographs of participants of the Great Patriotic War with descriptions of their life and feats; holding the Immortal Regiment marches.

Today, Japan, with ethnic Japanese accounting for 97% of the population, still lacks a legal instrument prohibiting discrimination on racial, national or religious grounds.<sup>164</sup>

The lack of comprehensive legislation in this area has drawn attention of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) established under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.<sup>165</sup>

The ongoing discrimination against ethnic minorities – Ainu living in the north and the Ryukyuans inhabiting the southern islands – is one of the main human rights problems faced by the Japanese society. The UN Human Rights

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<sup>164</sup> [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fJPN%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fJPN%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru)

<sup>165</sup> [https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20250221\\_16/](https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20250221_16/)

Council (HRC), other international monitoring structures as well as a significant number of human rights NGOs have been criticizing the Japanese government for the persisting gap in living standards between the above mentioned ethnicities, on the one hand, and the state-forming Japanese population, on the other.

There have been documented cases of harassment of members of small ethnic communities both in the labour market and in obtaining access to education and a number of social programs.

At the same time, discrimination against the Burakumin, the descendants of the "impure" medieval class, persists in relation to employment, housing and marriage.<sup>166</sup>

In recent years, the Japanese government applied certain efforts to protect the identity of indigenous peoples. In the implementation of the provisions of the Law on the Promotion of Policies to Foster Public Respect for the Heritage of the Ainu People adopted in May 2019 (granting it the indigenous status), Japan currently recognizes that the Ainu people faces a biased and discriminatory attitude in everyday life.

However, according to surveys held in 2020, about a quarter of people who identify themselves as the Ainu reported to have experienced such problems personally, and another 13 per cent were aware of such cases among acquaintances.

The sociological survey results (the survey was the first to cover the Ainu issues) published by the Hokkaido Prefectural Governor's Office in December 2024 indicate that nearly 27% of respondents have witnessed prejudicial treatment of the Ainu, including negative comments on social media, which confirms the chronic nature of the issue.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fJPN%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fJPN%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru)

<sup>167</sup> <https://www.hokkaido-np.co.jp/article/1061080/>

Public discrimination against the Ainu is not uncommon, including in the mainstream media,<sup>168</sup> in particular by Japan's largest public broadcaster NHK. Various Ainu-related and human rights associations continue to criticize the opportunistic nature of the law, which, in their opinion, was adopted without sufficient consideration of the Ainu people's viewpoint and "in fact provides for the exploitation of their cultural and historical heritage." It should be noted that doubts concerning the usefulness of these efforts by the central authorities regularly resurge in the journalist expert community.<sup>169</sup>

The Japanese Cabinet has been accused of exaggerating the positive impact of the social and economic support measures developed for the Ainu, since in reality, it is not the Ainu community but the Hokkaido Prefecture and its administrative and territorial entities, who receive the allocated funds. The need has been emphasized to supplement the basic policy with provisions detailing the steps to be taken to ensure the small people's rights to practice traditional methods of fishing, forestry and religious ceremonies.

From November 2020 to April 2024, the Sapporo District Court (Hokkaido Prefecture) was hearing a lawsuit filed by the Ainu Raporo Nation group demanding recognition of river fishing as their inalienable right under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the lifting of salmon fishing ban imposed by Japanese regulations (the verdict was negative). This was the first litigation of this sort in Japan's judicial practice.

In 2020, the Upopoy Ethnic Harmony Centre dedicated to the Ainu, their history, cultural features and traditions was opened on the island of Hokkaido. However, in 2021, the Honbetsu Council (Hokkaido Prefecture) turned down the Ainu Association's request to grant permission for the construction of traditional ceremonial buildings on the island.

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<sup>168</sup> <https://www.asahi.com/sp/ajw/articles/14367406>

<sup>169</sup> <https://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/330052>

It must be acknowledged that the idea of ethnic homogeneity is still popular with some members of the Japanese government. In 2020, Japan's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Taro Aso stated in his speech: "No other country but this one has lasted for as long as 2,000 years with one language, one ethnic group and one dynasty."<sup>170</sup> The mass media found his words contradicting the current policy of the central authorities, particularly given that it was made just one year after the adoption of a new law on the indigenous people.<sup>171</sup>

In December 2024, for the first time in history, the line committee of the Hokkaido legislative assembly ordered that the ashes of a member of the ethnic community from Abashiri, which had been kept in the museum of Sapporo, be handed over to the representatives of the ethnic group.<sup>172</sup> However, the existing official procedure for the repatriation of Ainu remains evokes a lot of criticism from both the Ainu ethnic group and the expert community. In particular, one points out the excessively stringent requirements, including those demanding that the applicants reside in the region where the exhumation procedure had been carried out at time earlier, and that "proper commemorative arrangements" be organized thereafter.

The situation of the indigenous people of the Ryukyu Islands remains somewhat complicated. Official Tokyo denies them benefits and support measures for their cultural identity. Experts from non-governmental entities point to the distorted nature of school education courses that include virtually no information on the identity and ethnic and linguistic uniqueness of the Ryukyu people.

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170 麻生太郎氏「日本は2千年、一つの民族」政府方針と矛盾 [Taro Aso's Statement: "No other country but this one has lasted for as long as 2,000 years with one language, one ethnic group and one dynasty" runs counter to the government policy]. 13 January 2020. <https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASN1F67HDN1FTIPE00X.html> .

171 麻生太郎氏「日本は2千年、一つの民族」政府方針と矛盾 [Taro Aso's Statement: "No other country but this one has lasted for as long as 2,000 years with one language, one ethnic group and one dynasty" runs counter to the government policy]. 13 January 2020. <https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASN1F67HDN1FTIPE00X.html> .

172 <https://www.hokkaido-np.co.jp/article/1099555/>





*Today, the Ryukyu language is mainly used by elderly residents of Okinawa Island.*  
<https://travelask.ru/blog/posts/17899-zhiteli-ostrovov-ryukyu-pochemu-oni-ne-schitayut-sebya-yapon>

The assimilation processes that have been underway for more than 130 years have led to a situation where the Ryukyu language (a unifying term for 6 closely related languages) is nowadays mainly used by the older generation, with younger people communicating in Japanese. The only language of instruction at school is Japanese, with the Ryukyu language gradually falling into disuse.

At the same time, the municipal authorities of the Okinawa Prefecture are calling on the government to urge the UN structures to withdraw resolutions recognizing the Ryukyu as an indigenous people. Therefore, on 4-8 July 2022, on the side-lines of the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council's Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the inhabitants of Ryukyu Island called on the international community to protect their indigenous rights.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> [https://cendoc.docip.org/collect/upd\\_ru/index/assoc/HASH01f7/01b8b54a.dir/Summary%20Notes%20EMRIP%2015th%20session\\_RU.pdf](https://cendoc.docip.org/collect/upd_ru/index/assoc/HASH01f7/01b8b54a.dir/Summary%20Notes%20EMRIP%2015th%20session_RU.pdf)

In addition to these problems, the residents of the northernmost and southernmost Japanese islands continue to face other manifestations of discrimination.

Facts of incitement to ethnic hatred and crimes committed against ethnic minorities on this grounds have been reported, first of all against ethnic Koreans, who are frequently subjected to open harassment.<sup>174</sup> Official representatives also afford making insulting remarks. However, neither government officials nor individuals have ever been held accountable for racist hate speech or hate crimes.

According to experts, the situation is being aggravated by the fact that Japan has no laws in place that prohibit racial, ethnic, religious or any other discrimination.

One scandal erupted in December 2022. Mio Sugita, parliamentary vice-minister for internal affairs and communications, published derogatory comments directed at representatives of ethnic minorities (Koreans and Ainu) wearing traditional costumes at a meeting of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The politician had to apologize under public pressure, but according to local observers, her forced "repentance" was not convincing.<sup>175</sup> The fact that she was removed from office by then Prime Minister Kishida only a month later following opposition demands and still retained her parliamentary mandate caused particular resentment.

Yoshiaki Yoshida, CEO of DHC, a major cosmetics and dietary supplement company, has repeatedly (most remarkably in 2016, 2020, and 2021) stated, including on the brand's official website, that the "overrepresentation of Koreans" in the official and political circles, as well as in media industry is unacceptable because it "threatens Japanese statehood".<sup>176</sup> Small-scale boycotts, suspension of cooperation with the corporation, and other forms of public response proved

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174 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-10-17/koreans-in-japan-hate-speech-case-highlights-workplace-racism>

175 <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14783372>

176 <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/05/01/national/media-national/hate-speech-in-japan/>

virtually ineffective. There have been no meaningful prosecutions of businessman Yoshiaki Yoshida.

The contents of new Japanese history students' books unveiled in the spring of 2023, highlighting ambiguous and sensitive for the Koreans issues from a biased pro-Japanese perspective aroused caused Koreans' indignation. Some of the textbooks failed to mention the fact that during World War II, workers from Korea and China had been forcibly mobilized to work at Japanese enterprises. Instead, the neutral wording "were engaged in the works" appeared. Moreover, the idea of the Japanese ownership of the East (Japanese) Sea Dokdo (Takeshima) archipelago, which is under the control of South Korea (subject of a territorial dispute between South Korea and Japan), became more pronounced.

On 28 March 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea summoned the minister counsellor of the Japanese Embassy, to express deep disappointment over the content of the history books. In this regard, a Ministry spokesperson told reporters: "Japan should squarely face history and take a more responsible attitude in educating the young generation... Japan needs to keep its promises in reaffirming its earlier apologies."<sup>177</sup>

All this happened against the backdrop of the agreements signed during the South Korean-Japanese summit in Tokyo on 16-17 March 2023, where South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida agreed to improve bilateral relations. At that, Seoul made significant concessions, proposing an indirect scheme for paying compensation to Korean workers who had been forcibly mobilized to work at Japanese enterprises. The compensation will be paid by Korean companies that received subsidies from Tokyo for paying post-war reparations, and not by Japanese firms (a scheme to which the latter and the Japanese government flatly objected).

Moreover, the Japanese Prime Minister bluntly refused to apologize for the crimes of the past, noting only that he supported the government's 1995 statement

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<sup>177</sup> <https://rg.ru/2023/03/29/iuzhnaia-koreia-vyrazila-glubokoe-sozhalenie-iaponii-iz-za-uchebnikov-istorii.html>

expressing deep remorse on behalf of Japan. The agreements reached, which the Government and President of South Korea worked to present as a "diplomatic breakthrough," draw backlash in the country because of significant unilateral concessions on Korea's part.

In this context, a wave of criticism against Japan and its past crimes, as well as Tokyo's official assessment of historical facts, has once again swept the South Korean society and media.

The Remembrance, Remorse, and Friendship memorial unveiled in 2004 in Takasaki city (Gunma Prefecture) by local activists to honour Korean workers forcibly sent to Japan during World War II, was demolished in late January 2024 following many years of litigation. The Prefecture officials claim that the decision was taken in response to "a violation of the obligation to abstain from using the site to hold political events." They acknowledged, however, that the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to Japan had not been consulted on the issue.<sup>178</sup>

A positive measure that can help suppress hate speech is the Act on the Promotion of Efforts to Eliminate Unfair Discriminatory Speech and Behaviour against Persons with Countries of Origin other than Japan adopted in June 2016.

However, critics note that the regulatory act provides for limited legal remedies for ethnic minorities,<sup>179</sup> since its scope of application is restricted to discriminatory actions of individuals against persons coming from other countries and residing in Japan "on legal grounds" and it lacks information on specific measures to be taken against offenders.

In November 2022, Japan's General Police Department (GPD) published a report assessing the performance of law enforcement agencies in 2021, according to which six cases of ethnic or racial profiling by local law enforcement officers during the reporting period had been documented.<sup>180</sup> These incidents involved

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178 <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/maebashi/20240328/1060016658.html>

179 [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fJPN%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fJPN%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru)

180 [https://www.npa.go.jp/policies/evaluation/04jigo-hyouka/jisseki\\_hyouka/r4\\_jizen\\_bunseki.pdf](https://www.npa.go.jp/policies/evaluation/04jigo-hyouka/jisseki_hyouka/r4_jizen_bunseki.pdf)

police officers from the Metropolitan Department, Kanagawa, Miyagi and Osaka Prefectures. Inappropriate behaviour included attempts to inquire about "nationality" rather than "citizenship," inspection of personal belongings of a young man with African-Japanese origin, prejudicial comments, etc. According to the police senior officials, the officers "did not have discriminatory intent based on racial or ethnic bias". Plans to organize necessary training and briefings for police officers so that they interact with citizens in an appropriate manner were announced.

A detailed GPD examination of this aspect was carried out after the US Embassy in Tokyo on 6 December 2021 posted on Twitter a warning to US citizens about Japanese police racial profiling cases.<sup>181</sup> However, experts believe that the figures contained in the report are understated. According to the Tokyo Bar Association, nearly 63 per cent out of 2,094 foreigners interviewed in 2022 faced pressing questioning by law enforcement officers, and 85 per cent of these believed this was due to their difference in appearance from the Japanese.<sup>182</sup>

As reported by TRT Russian of 30 January 2024, three Japanese residents of foreign descent filed a lawsuit against the government, accusing police of racial profiling. The case sheds light on simmering tensions over national identity in ethnically homogeneous Japan. The plaintiffs who live in Tokyo claim that they have been repeatedly stopped and questioned by the police solely based on their appearance – their race and skin colour. The victims claim this to be discrimination that violates the Japanese Constitution. Beside seeking compensation from the government, they also intend to set a legal precedent by criminalizing<sup>183</sup> racial profiling in court.

It is worth noting that the same is true not only for incidents involving police: studies have shown that in Japan, people of foreign descent often face

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181 <https://twitter.com/ACSTokyo/status/1467629914857816065>

182 <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20221217/p2a/00m/0na/010000c>

183 <https://www.trtrussian.com/amp/novosti-mir/isk-protiv-rasizma-v-yaponii-16801553>

discrimination in renting accommodation, employment, and various forms of social interaction.

The high profile of the above trial has sparked public debate on inclusivity and the very essence of being a "Japanese." The recent case when a Ukrainian-born model was crowned Miss Japan 2024 has sparked discussions on beauty standards and the social acceptance of those who look different.<sup>184</sup>

As reported by BBC on 24 January 2024,<sup>185</sup> the victory of Karolina Shiino, who was born in Ternopol, Ukraine, and moved to Japan at the age of five, in the Miss Japan 2024 beauty contest held on 22 January 2024, has provoked a public debate on national identity in Japan and on the issue whether a model of non-Japanese origin was entitled to holding this title at all.

Many Japanese resented the complete lack of Japanese roots in case of this 26-year-old model, who became the first naturalized Japanese citizen to win the contest. Some social media users called her win a sign of the times, others said she didn't look like Miss Japan,<sup>186</sup> and there were those who pointed out the political context,<sup>187</sup> wondering whether the model's Ukrainian heritage had made her a suitable winner of the pageant.<sup>188</sup>

Tokyo's position on refugees remains a pressing issue. Japan contributes financially to the work of international humanitarian aid bodies, yet it takes a very passive stance regarding the admission of foreign nationals.

Tokyo is criticized for its outdated approaches and excessive requirements with regards to refugees and asylum seekers: figures of annual admission of foreign citizens forced to leave their usual place of residence in Japan are much lower than in other developed countries. Out of 7,237 applications for the status handled in 2022, 187 were approved, 5,418 rejected and 1,632 left undecided (for comparison: in 2020, 3,936 applications were submitted, and only 47 of them were

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184 <https://www.trtrussian.com/amp/novosti-mir/isk-protiv-rasizma-v-yaponii-16801553>

185 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-68078061>

186 <https://iz.ru/1639093/2024-01-24/iapontcy-vozmutilis-novoi-miss-iaponiia-ukrainskogo-proiskhozhdeniia>

187 <https://iz.ru/1639093/2024-01-24/iapontcy-vozmutilis-novoi-miss-iaponiia-ukrainskogo-proiskhozhdeniia>

188 <https://iz.ru/1645319/2024-02-05/pobedivshaia-na-miss-iaponiia-2024-ukrainka-otkazalas-ot-titula>

approved).<sup>189</sup> In 2023, the authorities recognized only 289 persons as refugees (the number of applicants being more than 8 thousand <sup>190</sup>). In 2024, out of 12,373 applicants, only 190 were granted the refugee status.<sup>191</sup>

The case of a 33-year-old Sri Lankan citizen who died in an immigration detention centre in March 2021 due to the lack of access to medical care (before the June 2023 national law amendments entered into force, detention in an immigration centre could have been of an indefinite term, which was considered inhuman treatment by the UNHRC), is widely known.

In June 2024, immigration laws were tightened. Under the new rules, a candidate for the refugee status can submit a relevant application twice; after that, in case of refusal, he/she is subject to deportation (the number of applications has not been limited before, which allowed for a legal stay in the country without sufficient grounds).

However, for the reasons of "political expedience", as was the case with Ukrainian "refugees" after the beginning of the SMO, Tokyo does not hesitate to depart from its own harsh provisions: despite Tokyo's outdated practices with regard to refugees and asylum-seekers, there are exceptions applicable to Ukrainian citizens: they have been privileged with the right to residence, public health insurance, and employment assistance. This is in fact discrimination against people coming from other countries.

In the past, only people who faced persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or because of political views were recognized as refugees in Japan. In line with the amendments, a system for taking in the so-called quasi-refugees fleeing conflicts was established.<sup>192</sup>

Since February 2022, the Japanese side has taken in about 2.5 thousand Ukrainian citizens as "evacuees from conflict zones", providing them with a

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189 Human Rights Watch Japan Events of 2021 – [official website] URL: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/japan> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/japan>

190 <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/21055323>

191 The Asahi Shimbun Newspaper, 15 March 2025; <https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/13f2ab26>

192 <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/21055323>

temporary residence status. Amendments to the legislation allow them to claim the residence status, work and receive pensions as "quasi-refugees."<sup>193</sup>

However, the Japanese government has failed to provide decent standard of living for this category of "refugees." Most of those who left Ukraine and arrived in Japan are living in utmost poverty. Few can find a job because it is very difficult to exercise the right to employment due to language and cultural barriers. To support persons with this status only one million yen per year are allocated, which is equivalent to about USD 7,000.<sup>194</sup>

The new rules also allow foreigners under deportation procedures to live outside places of detention, as the old regulations required, provided that they are supervised by duly authorized persons.

The changes sparked criticism among the opposition and social activists. They believe this will lead to more deportations of persons who remain at risk of persecution and face other threats in their home countries.<sup>195</sup>

According to the Japanese newspaper The Asahi Shimbun, at least 17 foreigners who had applied for the refugee status, were deported from Japan following the stiffening of the national law on immigration control and recognition of refugee status.<sup>196</sup>

Some criticism of Tokyo comes from its closest allies. For example, the US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2022 and 2023 acknowledged Japan's failure to meet minimum standards regarding the eradication of human trafficking, forced labour and sexual exploitation, while also taking note of the country's efforts to remedy the situation.<sup>197</sup> The report also documented cases when

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<sup>193</sup> <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/21055323>

<sup>194</sup> <https://iz.ru/1668320/2024-03-20/v-mid-nazvali-neeftivnoi-podderzhku-ukrainskikh-bezhentcev-v-iaponii>

<sup>195</sup> The Asahi Shimbun, 15 March 2025; <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/21055323>;  
<https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/13f2ab26>

<sup>196</sup> The Asahi Shimbun Newspaper, 15 March 2025; <https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/13f2ab26>

<sup>197</sup> The U.S. Department of State 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report – [official website]  
URL: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022-TIP-Report.pdf>; The U.S. Department of State 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report – [official website] URL: [https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Trafficking-in-Persons-Report-2023\\_Introduction-V3e.pdf](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Trafficking-in-Persons-Report-2023_Introduction-V3e.pdf)



passports were confiscated from students from Bhutan who had arrived to undergo training courses under Japan's apprenticeship programs.