

Spring Convention 2026

April 18 2026 – 10 am – 2:45 pm

Location: Bürgerräume West, 22 Bebelstraße, 70193 Stuttgart
(accessible for people living with disabilities)

We warmly invite you to this year's Spring Conference on Saturday, April 18, 2026, in Stuttgart. We have put together an exciting and varied program, which you can find below. The keynote address will focus on the struggles of refugees in Baden-Württemberg. This will be followed by small networking sessions where the projects Heval, Justice for Mahdi, and Vertrauensperson Abschiebehaft will be presented. After the lunch break, you can choose from a total of four options—either a lecture or a workshop—during the thematic session. Please note that places per session are limited.

The conference is free of charge and open to anyone working or volunteering in the refugee and asylum space and those who are personally affected. A vegan lunch, childcare, and an interpreter for English and/or Dari will be provided. Please register by April 15, 2026, using the form below.

Our conference is intended to provide as safe a space as possible for all participants. We therefore ask all participants to review the agreement on how we interact with one another when registering and to keep it in mind throughout the day.

The conference is taking place as part of the “Active for Social Participation” project, supported by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, and Integration with state funds approved by the Baden-Württemberg State Parliament. Additional funding is provided by the German Postcode Lottery.

PROGRAM

10:00 am: Welcome by Lucia Braß, Chair of the Refugee Council of Baden-Württemberg

10:15 am: Interview and talk with Rex Osa: The Struggles of Refugees

For decades, refugees have been actively involved in Baden-Württemberg. They fight for better living conditions, against racist exclusion, and for greater awareness of the root causes of displacement.

Rex Osa is the founder of the organization Refugees4Refugees and has long been active as an advocate in Baden-Württemberg as well as internationally. Together with him, we want to look back on the successful struggles of refugees in Baden-Württemberg and discuss what we can learn from them today.

11:00 am: Coffee break

11:15 am: Volunteer Work – Networking Session

12:15 pm: Lunch Break

1:15 pm: Thematic Session

(1) Democratic Self-Governance in Rojava: Achievements and Challenges

with Mizgin Ibin

The workshop provides an overview of the current political and social situation in Rojava with a particular focus on democratic self-governance structures, social developments, and key challenges posed by ongoing conflicts and external pressure. The recent integration agreement between the self-administration in Rojava and the Syrian transitional government will also be analyzed and discussed. Additional topics include equality, social participation, and civic engagement, as well as the extent to which pressure on Rojava constitutes a cause of displacement. Alongside substantive input, the workshop will create space for dialogue about the international significance of these developments and possibilities for solidarity.

(2) Focus on Ukrainian Roma*

with Seán McGinley and Volodymyr Shcherbakov

The treatment of Roma* refugees from Ukraine is heavily influenced by deep-rooted historical stereotypes and discrimination. This workshop will critically examine media and political discourse on this topic, examine the lived realities of Ukrainian Roma* before and during the war, discuss their situation and experiences in Germany, and explore the work of self-organized groups that advocate for the needs and interests of Roma* refugees to be meaningfully addressed.

(3) Workshop: Understanding Racist Police Violence and Supporting Those Affected

with Jordan Schwarz and Julian Staiger

Racist police violence affects many refugees and migrants. The workshop begins with a brief introduction to the causes and context - drawing on perspectives from anti-racism and postcolonial theory - before turning to practical questions: How can those affected be effectively supported? What options for action exist before, during, and after encounters with the police?

Combining input with open discussion, the workshop aims to build confidence in taking action and to create space for questions and shared strategies.

(4) Latest Updates on the CEAS

with Jürgen Blechinger

The CEAS reform comes into effect on June 12, 2026. What will change for refugees seeking protection in Baden-Württemberg? This session will cover the key changes to the asylum procedure, as well as important new developments such as the external border procedure for arrivals at the state's airports, the implementation of so-called "secondary migration centers," and the new screening procedure. The session will also address how protections can be strengthened for people who are particularly vulnerable.

2:45 pm: End of the substantive program

3:00 pm: General Meeting of the Refugee Council of Baden-Württemberg e.V.

All members, supporting members, and interested parties are cordially invited to attend the general meeting.