

POLICE VIOLENCE OBSERVATORY IN BELGIUM



OBSPOL

<https://obsno1.be>

FACING THE POLICE : A SURVIVAL GUIDE

VICTIM

BEFORE

- **Protect your mobile with a password:** your mobile is then legally protected just like your home, unauthorized access is trespassing !
- **Make sure you have your ID document with you:** otherwise you may be detained up to 12 hours and/or be fined (26 to 500€)



DURING THE CONFRONTATION

- **Stay calm and polite:** insults, irony, lack of respect or physical resistance will only make things worse for you !
- **Try to record the scene, avoid insisting if the police pretend you're not allowed to:** the police are often poorly trained and tend to lie to intimidate you and protect themselves, better call out to passers-by !
- **Do not resist!** You might be charged with rebellion (a serious offense) and call more blows upon yourself. Better be utterly passive and act later !
- **If the police are hurting you, tell them so and ask them to stop:** once alerted, they are engaging in inhumane and degrading treatment !
- **In case the situation is escalating:** call out to passers-by, asking them to film, and shout your mobile number so they can reach out to you afterwards!
- **Identify the officers:** names, ID numbers on their uniform, rank, vehicle licence plate, name or number of the police zone on the vehicle, physical description, language etc.
- **Do not tell them you are going to lodge a complaint:** they might feel threatened and lose any inhibition!
- **Never let the police know your mobile password:** even if they threaten you, otherwise your images will be wiped out and so your critical elements of proof, and your contacts might be threatened as well...
- **Try to locate the scene:** streetname, house number, bus stop, bar name etc. and the time.

AFTER

- **During an audition, you have « no statement to make » !** Regardless of the pressure the police or the Procureur (attorney general) might impose on you, you should never tell them anything. The only person you should talk to (with your lawyer) is a judge in a court of law.
- **At the end of the audition, you should only sign the minutes if they are consistent** with what you said. Ask for a copy if this is the case.

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- **If you are detained**, (12 hours max. or 24 in case of «illegal» status), ask for a trusted person to be made aware of your predicament.
- **Go see a doctor right away in case of physical or psychological violence**, and ask the practitioner to write a report documenting not only your injuries but their probable cause/origin in relation with your claims of police brutality (blows, over-tight handcuffs etc.) or your mental health state.
- **Copy all videos, photos, testimonies and medical reports on a USB key** and ask a trusted person to keep it safe for you outside of your home.
- **Testify on ObsPol's website as soon as possible**, while the aggression is still fresh in your memory (<https://voices.obspol.org/>). Tell us your story in as much detail as possible.
- **Lodge a complaint with the Comité P** (<https://comitep.be/deacuteposer-plainte.html>). Even if there is very little chance something comes out of it, the Comité P will have no choice than to include your complaint in the official police violence statistics!
- **In case of racist, sexist or homophobic police violence**, contact **Unia** (<https://www.signalement.unia.be/fr/signale-le>, toll-free number : 0800 12 800)
- **Read our « Your rights »** page to get some information about what you can do next (<https://obspol.be/vos-droits/>)
- **Contact a lawyer who knows about police violence cases to define the best strategy** in case you intend to go to court. May you need some assistance in finding one, write us at contact@obspol.be.
- **If you want to lodge a complaint**, go to another police station than the one where your aggression took place! Any other one would do, and they have to take your complaint.

WITNESS

BEFORE

- **Protect your mobile with a password**: your mobile is then legally protected like your home, unauthorized access is trespassing!
- **Make sure you have your ID document** otherwise you may be detained up to 12 hours and/or be fined (26 to 500€).



DURING THE CONFRONTATION

- **Record the intervention and call out to the victim** to get his/her phone number so you can reach out later to provide images!
- **If the police ask you to move away**: just take a few steps away to avoid annoying or provoking them.
- **If the police ask you to stop filming**: kindly remind them it is your right, but do not insist if you feel threatened, just pretend you're moving away and start filming again in a more discreet way.
- **If the police ask you to erase your images**: just politely say no and lock your mobile.
- **If the police grab your mobile and try to erase your images**, they are trespassing if your mobile is locked with a password.

AFTER

- **Try to reach out to the victims**, whenever possible, or at least ObsPol : contact@obspol.be with the details you gathered from the scene (location, time, police identity, images etc.), we'll try to make the connexion!