

FlüchtlingsRAT NRWe.V.

Newsletter June 2016

Dear Reader!

We have been reporting on new amendments to the German asylum law almost every month. Only mid-May the German Bundestag has passed a law, declaring three north African states as safe states of origin. Asylum applications from these countries will eventually be processed within 48 hours, meaning that refugees will hardly have access to legal counseling. Flüchtlingsrat NRW calls on the Landesregierung of North Rhine-Westphalia to vote with a "No" at the upcoming vote at the Federal Council. On the 18. and 19. of June many people will speak up against the German governments' walls-up policies and against the tightening of the asylum law. Many renowned organizations join the "Menschenkette – Chain of people" and stand in for a "open, human and diverse Germany and Europe" on the streets of several German cities – among others in Bochum.

In the June-edition of our Newsletter we also report on the new training opportunities for volunteers of the Flüchtlingsrat NRW, on the rising number of deportations in NRW as well as on the eviction of the refugee camp Idomeni in Greece.

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Searching for reports on nighttime deportation

According to a decree of the NRW Landesregierung, families with children should not be deported at night-time. Unfortunately, the Flüchtlingsrat NRW has repeatedly received reports, stating that the Ausländerbehörde ignores this instruction. At the end of May, a pregnant woman was deported to Hungary in the middle of the night from Albachten, close to Münster. If you know about cases where families with children have been deported during the night, please inform us and write an E-mail to [info\(at\)frnrw.de](mailto:info(at)frnrw.de).

Flüchtlingsrat NRW demands „No“ for further safe countries of origin

Flüchtlingsrat NRW has called on the Landesregierung to vote against the proposed law which would declare Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia as safe countries of origin. These countries cannot be declared safe, as human rights are systematically breached there. Especially the illegality of homosexuality as well as the situation in the prisons are alarming. As a consequence, asylum seekers from these states are treated as if having low perspectives to stay from the beginning. The situation is expected to aggravate as of this summer, when asylum procedures will be concluded within 48 hours. People from so-called "safe" countries of origin would hardly have any access to legal counseling and their asylum procedures are expected to be rejected as "offensichtlich unbegründet" – "obviously unfounded", which in turn leads to further legal disadvantages. It is now up to the NRW-Landesregierung to vote against the bill in the Federal Council in June. The vote in June is the last chance to block the bill.

Chain of people against racism in Bochum

A broad alliance of civil society organizations calls to participate at the chain of people against racism in several German cities on the 18th and 19th of June. The aim is to connect mosques, churches, synagogues, social centers, refugee camps, museums, theaters and city halls. Organizations such as Amnesty International, PRO ASYL and DGB have signed the call which states that racist violence and European policies against refugees are putting social cohesion and democratic values at risk. The chain of people set a sign for a “open, human and diverse Germany and Europe”.

People are coming together in Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, Munich and also in Bochum. Here the participants will meet on the 18th of June at 12pm at the central station (Hauptbahnhof), at the “Kirmesplatz” on the Castroper Street and at the City Hall Square (Rathausplatz).

Numbers of deportations continue to rise

The number of people being deported from North Rhine-Westphalia has continued to rise in 2015. According to the NRW Ministry of the Interior, 4.395 refugees have been deported in 2015 in NRW. In the previous year 2.929 deportations had taken place. As a consequence, North Rhine-Westphalia is the federal state which has sent most refugees back to their countries of origin or to third countries (compared to other federal states in Germany). This trend seems to persist in 2016: in the first four months of 2016 1.324 refugees were deported. Most recently, on May 3rd, over 100 refugees were chartered from Düsseldorf to Tirana and Pristina.

Most deportations take place from Düsseldorf Airport. Here the “Forum Flughäfen in Nordrhein-Westfalen” is present since 2001 to observe the deportations and control that authorities stick to legal requirements. In cases of conflict the “Forum Flughäfen” tries to mediate between local authorities, politicians and charities/civil society organizations. The Flüchtlingsrat NRW is a member of the board together with churches, the Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Police.

Despite the rising number of deportations, churches conclude that the cooperation with the authorities has been mostly positive. Observing deportations at the airport has led to more transparency. The local deportation-observer Dalia Höhne said that she has not observed assaults or harsh treatments by the authorities. Nevertheless, she repeatedly observed ill people, heavily pregnant as well as mentally ill people being deported. These refugees were actually not in the position to be deported.

To ensure an efficient observation of deportations it would be necessary to employ more people as well as to grant the observers more room for action – for example the possibility to accompany the deportation until the destination.

Refugee camp Idomeni in Greece evicted

The Greek police has evicted the refugee camps Idomeni at the Greek-Macedonian border at the end of May. Around 9.000 inhabitants of the camp have been transported to state reception camps. According to media reports the operation went mostly peaceful without resistance by the refugees. Nevertheless, only state media had access to the camps and foreign journalists as well as aid organizations were hindered to report on the situation.

Since end of February 2016 the Macedonian government had refused to let refugees pass the border with Greece. In the hope that the situation would change and the border would re-open, many decided to stay at the reception camp in Idomeni – a camp which was originally planned for 1.500

people. For several weeks private aid organisations and activists provided for food and for medical care filling that gap that Greek authorities did not provide.

According to PRO ASYL and other migration organisations the situation at the state reception centers is hardly better and even dangerous for old people, physically disabled people, pregnant women, unaccompanied minors and ill people. Furthermore, it is almost impossible to apply for asylum, family reunification or the transposal to another European country, because Greek authorities are completely overloaded and overstrained with the situation. The precarious situation of refugees in Greece is also the responsibility of other European states, such as Germany who had promised to take in 17.000 refugees from Greece. In fact, only 37 people have been transferred to Germany – “an absolutely shameful performance.”

Events *

23.05.-06.06.2016: Travelling-exhibition „Europa-Was machst Du an Deinen Grenzen?“. Nadelfabrik, Reichsweg 30, Aachen.

Further information under www.amnesty.de

28.05.-09.07.2016: Theatre performance „Kein schöner Land“ Theater Krefeld, Theaterplatz 3, Krefeld.

Further information under www.theater-kr-mg.de

01.06.2016: Lecture „Grundlagen und Durchführung von Kirchenasyl“. 7.30pm, Evangelischer Kirchenkreis Gladbach-Neuss, Hauptstraße 200, Mönchengladbach.

Further information under www.philippus-akademie.de

03.-05.06.2016: Seminar on asylum right. 5pm, Arbeitnehmer-Zentrum Königswinter, Johannes-Albers-Allee 3, Königswinter.

Further information under www.fes.de

03.-05.06.2016: Seminar “Austausch von ehrenamtlichen Helfer_innen in der Flüchtlingsarbeit”. 5pm, Hotel-Restaurant Zur Mühle, Gründer Talstr. 400, Iserlohn.

Further information under www.fes.de

04.06.2016: Open meeting of the working group Unaccompanied Minor Refugees of Flüchtlingsrat NRW. 11am, Haus der Begegnung, Alsenstraße 19, Bochum.

Further information under www.frrnw.de

09.06.2016: Interview-evening with refugees – their experiences on their way to and in Germany. 7.30pm, Volkshochschule, Platz der Deutschen Einheit 1, Hamm.

Further information under www.fuge-hamm.org

13.06.2016: Lecture “Durch die Wand-von der Asylbewerberin zur Rechtsanwältin”. Café Church, III. Hagen 30, Essen.

Further information under www.gmoe.de

17.-18.06.2016: Seminar on fundraising. 1.30pm, Stiftung Mitarbeit, Ellerstr.67, Bonn.

Further information under www.mitarbeit.de

21.06.2016: Lecture "Warum aus Eritrea flüchten?". 1pm, Multikulturelles Forum, Raum Liverpool, Hafenstr. 10, Hamm.

Further information under www.multikulti-forum.de

*All the events are in German language.

Further events, news on political developments concerning refugee issues and information about our work can be found on our homepage under www.fnrnw.de or on our Facebook-page <http://www.facebook.com/FluechtlingsratNRW>.

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