

FlüchtlingsRAT NRWe.V.

Newsletter July 2016

Dear Reader!

*On the 19th of June more than 40.000 people across Germany joined the “Menschenkette - chain of people” as well as manifestations speaking out against racism and xenophobia. Only a few days before, researchers of the University of Leipzig had published the results of a new study, which found out that more and more Germans are hostile towards refugees, Rom*nja and Muslim people. Germany is deeply divided by the refugee issue. But the growing group of aggressive racists are confronted by thousands of people who tirelessly support people seeking protection and who stand against racist demonstrations. Furthermore, political disputes on refugees and immigration do not seem to settle. As published by the United Nations on World Refugee Day, the number of people fleeing their homes has considerably increased: in 2015, 65 million people were fleeing worldwide. Even if the number of refugees coming to North Rhine-Westphalia is decreasing at the moment – the refugee issue will keep us busy as long as war, persecution and poverty exists across the world forcing people to flee. Thus, in the future, work won't be lacking for refugee supporters.*

As always, we are happy to receive compliments, criticism and remarks on our Newsletter. If you don't want to further receive this Newsletter please write to [initiative\(at\)fnrw.de](mailto:initiative(at)fnrw.de).

40.000 people demonstrate against racism

On June 18 and 19, over 40.000 people sent a strong sign for diversity and human rights in several German cities. 29 organisations, among other Amnesty International and the Federation of German Trade Unions, had called for participation at “Chain of people – Menschenkette” in Berlin, Bochum, Hamburg, Leipzig and Munich, with the aim to gather various social institutions, refugee camps, cultural institutions and city councils speaking up for one aim. Further manifestations against racism took place in several German cities. The civil society organization Campact speaks of a “deeply moving weekend”: “More than 40.000 people stand hand in hand against racism and for human rights and diversity – united by the conviction that we can only live peacefully in this world, if we treat each other caringly and with respect. This weekend we have proven that we will never be divided by hatred.”

In Bochum 8.500 people built a chain of people from the town hall and the main station all through the city centre. Speakers were among others, Frank Bsirske, the federal chairman of the trade union ver.di as well as Annette Kurschus president of the Protestant Church Westphalia.



Chain of people in front of Bochum town hall on the 18th June 2016 (Photo: Flüchtlingsrat NRW)

In her speech, Birgit Naujoks, the managing director of Flüchtlingsrat NRW, pointed to the massive rise in aggression against refugees. Mrs Naujoks further highlighted that racism does not only manifest itself in violent assaults, but is also inscribed in legislations and administrative governmental actions. Accordingly, she criticized the newest tightening up of the laws which regulate the classification of so-called “good” and “bad” refugees. These divisions create an erosion of the basic right to asylum.

Tagesschau: Zehntausende bilden Menschenketten (19.06.2016)

8500 demonstrieren in Bochum Hand in Hand gegen Rassismus (18.06.2016)

State government wants to expand deportations

The federal government of North-Rhine-Westphalia wants to double up the number of returns of rejected asylum seekers. This was announced by a press release of the NRW Ministry of the Interior. Only in the first four months of this year, 8.531 persons were deported or left the country voluntarily – a considerable rise in comparison to last year. According to NRW Minister of the Interior Ralf Jäger, mainly people from Morocco and Algeria who have committed criminal offences should be sent back to their countries.

Already in 2015, the number of deportations had considerably risen in comparison to 2014, even if the Ministry of the Interior stressed that the willingness to return “voluntarily” should be raised and promoted.

Moreover, the ministry announced that asylum procedures should be further accelerated: “Until the end of September 2015 all asylum seekers in NRW shall be registered and shall have lodged their applications for asylum. According to the municipalities, around 109.000 people are waiting to lodge their asylum application at the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF). Due to the high influx of refugees last year, the complete registration and immediate application for asylum was impossible. “We are working on catching up with this as fast as possible. The federal government, municipalities and people will all benefit from these accelerated asylum procedures”.

Asylverfahren werden beschleunigt, Zahl der Abschiebungen soll verdoppelt werden (15.06.2016)

New study proves anti-refugee attitudes

Every second year, the University of Leipzig publishes its „Mitte“-study on authoritarian and right wing extremist attitudes in Germany. This year’s study carries the title “Die enthemmte Mitte” – (“The middle class devoid of moral”). All in all, the researchers did not record a rise of right extremist attitudes, yet at the same time they recorded a clear rise in resentments towards Muslims, Rom*nja as well as towards refugees in Germany. 41% of the people surveyed demanded the immigration of Muslims to be prohibited. 58% have a “problem with” Rom*nja people staying somewhere in the area and 60% believe that most asylum seekers do not really have to fear persecution in their home countries. These hostile attitudes are notably backed by supporters of the right-wing party “Alternative für Deutschland” (AfD). According to the researches, these sympathizers of right-wing populism cannot be regarded as “seduced by the party” but instead: “Most AfD-voters share xenophobic convictions”. These prejudices also prevail among the non-voters. “The potential for extreme right and right-wing populist parties is even bigger than shown by the actual electoral results. Furthermore, persons with extreme right attitudes are more and more willing to use violence as a means to push through their interests.

Universität Leipzig: Gesellschaft ist zunehmend polarisiert, Bereitschaft zu Gewalt steigt (15.06.2016)

Zusammenfassung der zentralen Untersuchungsergebnisse (PDF, 5,4 MB)

Universität Leipzig: Die enthemmte Mitte. Autoritäre und rechtsextreme Einstellung in Deutschland (PDF, 1,6 MB)

The United Nations report a new record high of refugees around the world

According to the recently published annual report of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of refugees and displaced persons has risen over the past year. The number of people who were forced to leave their homes rose to 65.3 million, of which 24.5 million are international refugees and asylum seekers and 40.8 million internally displaced persons, meaning those people fleeing within their home country. In 2014, it was 59.5 million refugees and displaced persons. According to the report, the rise in numbers had mainly two reasons: on the one hand the ever escalating military conflicts - such as in Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Burundi, Ukraine as well as in the Central African Republic -, on the other hand, less and less refugees can return to their countries of origin because the conflicts that made people flee in the first place, persist for decades.

Most people who had to leave their home countries, came from Syria (4.9 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million) and Somalia (1.1 million). Turkey, Pakistan and Lebanon received the largest refugee populations with 2.5 million, 1.5 million and 1.1 million respectively. Lebanon received the largest number of refugees in relation to their own population. Here, almost every fifth inhabitant of the country had immigrated as a refugee. Germany received 441.900 asylum applications, as much as no other country in the world.

In light of the increased number of refugees, High Commissioner Filippo Grandi, warned the international community against sealing-off borders: "At sea, alarmingly many people lose their lives and land routes are increasingly blocked. In addition, many countries are running political campaigns against asylum. The willingness of states, to work together not only for refugees, but also in the

common interest of humanity together is currently being challenged. Thereby, it is precisely this unifying spirit that is so urgently needed."

UNHCR: Flucht und Vertreibung 2015 drastisch gestiegen (20.06.2016)

UNHCR Jahresbericht 2015 (englisch, PDF, 5,2 MB)

Material for Refugees

Information sheet on the asylum procedure

On its website, the Informationsverbund Asyl und Migration provides an overview on the asylum procedure, the "Anhörung" (Personal Interview) and the possible decisions by the BAMF in seven languages.

Informationsverbund Asyl und Migration: Hinweise für Asylsuchende in Deutschland

Video on the asylum interview

Flüchtlingsrat Köln has produced a short animation film which explains the asylum interview. The video is available in 14 different languages.

Asyl in Deutschland: Die Anhörung

Information by the BMFSFJ

The Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) published a range of informative flyers in several languages. Among other topics, flyers on pregnancy, domestic violence and sexual identity can be downloaded.

BMFSFJ: Publikationen für Flüchtlinge

Arabic audio-course to learn German

The company Jicki provides a free audio German course directed at refugees and migrants coming from Arabic-speaking countries. The "Vokabeldusche, Deutsch für arabisch Sprechende" consists of five audio lessons with 100 vocabularies each as well as an accompanying book in PDF format. The course provides 500 vocabularies for the daily use.

Jicki: Deutsch für arabisch Sprechende

Brochure on children's rights

„Auch du hast Rechte! Selbstverständlich!“ – („You have rights too! Is this obvious!?“): the Kölner Appell gegen Rassismus e.V. published a brochure on children's rights. On ten pages, the main rights inscribed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are highlighted. The brochure can be downloaded in German and Arabic.

Auch Du hast Rechte! Selbstverständlich!

Events *

05.07.2016: „Hin und Weg 2“ – Second part of the film series on flight, refuge and its consequences. 7.30 pm, CinemaxX, Bundesallee 250, Wuppertal.

Further information under www.medienprojekt-wuppertal.de

09.07.2016: German-arabic concert for kids by the symphony orchestra Niederrhein. 11.00 am, Theater Mönchengladbach, Odenkirchener Str. 78, Mönchengladbach.

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

15.-24.07.2016: No Border Camp in Münster

Further information under www.nobordercampms.noblogs.org

27.08.2016: Symposium „Was Menschen zur Flucht bewegt“. 11.00 am, Alte Feuerwache, Melchiorstraße 3, Köln

Further information under www.boell.de

Further events, news on political developments concerning refugee issues and information about our work can be found on our homepage www.frnw.de or on our Facebook-page

<http://www.facebook.com/FluechtlingsratNRW>.

*All the events are in German language.

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