

## What does security mean to you? Perspectives on deportations

When politicians from the CSU, such as Alexander Dobrindt, former minister of interior Thomas De Maizière and Horst Seehofer call for higher numbers of deportation and create the impression of all people seeking asylum in Europe being criminals, we have to raise our voice! We have to show who are the ones not following the German law and most of all, who are the ones disrespecting the human rights of people! We have to show that the European civil society is voluntarily part of the Anti-Abschiebe-Industrie! We are not going to allow that our friends are deported!

In April 2018, we met to discuss what is going on in the current German debate on “safe countries of origin”, deportations to Afghanistan and the concepts of so-called “Gefährder” and “Identitätsverweigerer”. Together with Women in Exile, Stop Deportation Group Berlin and Arbeitskreis Asyl Göttingen, on our podium we answered questions regarding the meaning of safety for privileged citizens and safety for people under threat of deportation. We discussed whether any so-called “country of origin” can be considered safe, if it does not provide social and political security for the people living there.

During the discussion, Bethi from Women in Exile especially underlined the increasing criminalization of refugees and the unsafe situation for women in asylum centres in Germany. Instead of tackling serious issues such as sexual harassment in refugee facilities, which Women in Exile has been stressing for more than 15 years, whole communities are being criminalized for the actions of individuals, such as it happened after the New Year incidents in Cologne. As a consequence, deportations are being legitimized because many people perceive refugees as criminals.

Aki and Jan from AK Asyl Göttingen informed us about forms of resistance against deportations, an issue that their group has been working on for many years. Aki stressed that while Germany had planned to deport 500 000 people in 2017, only 5 % of them were deported eventually. A fact that he convincingly relates to visible and invisible forms of resistance from the civil society. Aki emphasised that it was important to understand and develop collective actions of resistance. As a basis it is necessary that people living outside and inside of asylum centres establish close contacts. Jan, furthermore talked about current challenges through political changes and restrictions. The more repression the system creates, the more we are asked for creative forms of civil disobedience to find new strategies for resistance.

Broadening the discussion to the situation beyond Germany, Asif from the Stop Deportation Group opened a debate on what actually happens to people after their deportation. Focusing on the context of Pakistan, Asif illustrated that only for asking asylum in another country, people risk spending 5 years in prison. Thus, people who are being deported to Pakistan usually end up in prison, irrespective of having committed any crime or not. Building on his



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experience, he mentions the difficulties to keep in contact with people after they had been deported. Asif also called on improving the strategies of refugee support in Germany. According to his experience, activist groups too often worked on different issues without finding common strategies and connecting struggles.

So, let's unite our struggles! Freedom of movement for everybody! For the right to stay and the right to go! Stop Deportations!



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