

The german deportation industry

A chronicle of illegal deportations from Eisenhüttenstadt (legal deportations are too numerous to be mentioned)

I am a refugee. I spent two and a half months in the open Lager of Eisenhüttenstadt. Now I am part of a solidarity group against this Lager and the attached deportation jail.

I want to share with you my point of view and experience of refugees' situation in Berlin and Brandenburg – how I felt that my freedom was over: I was in the German asylum system. End of freedom means that you can't choose the city where you want to live. The first step in the asylum system is to apply for asylum in the city where your friends live, but they separate you from them and put you wherever they want. It was the same with me. I was in Eisenhüttenstadt. First I wanted to make clear that this is the worst Lager in the world. Inside the Lager there is the Bundesamt, a police station, the Ausländerbehörde, a deportation prison and security services, which behave like police. We, refugees, know that security is also police.

Let me tell you about the life of refugees in the Lager:

- They cook fresh food only every three days. Refugees do not have the right to cook for themselves.
- There is no access to medical treatment.
- There is a repressing system of social isolation from the outside world. It is very difficult to receive a visit from friends.
- The rooms and toilets are unhygienic.

You are not allowed to leave the Lager before you had your asylum interview. Even then, you may not go farther than 14km away. Also, you are not allowed to leave the Lager for more than six hours without permission – and it is impossible to get this permission. We tried it several times, but they never gave it to us. Even when we provided a lawyer's invitation. There are only two people from Diakonie giving independent legal advice to more than 800 refugees. It's not enough, they have limited capacity. You do have the right to have a lawyer, but in reality this is nearly impossible, because we cannot go out and in Eisenhüttenstadt there are no lawyers. That means: We do not have lawyers. There are children, families, pregnant women, they do not have any playgrounds for the kids, no clothes, no shoes. Children don't go to school. This is the situation refugees have to face in the camp.

It is also necessary to highlight the illegal deportations that occurred since May 2013 (Legal deportations are everyday occurrence).

What happened on 20th of May 2013? Let me tell you: One family from Kurdistan was forced to be deported. On that day the father of the family took twenty sleeping pills and tried to commit suicide. Doctors came and saved his life. We, refugees, tried to find out what had happened to him but nobody wanted to tell us. They took his family away and they disappeared. We do not know what happened to them. All we know is that they deported them. This is not all. There were more suicide attempts:

Next comes the 28th of May 2013: One guy from Chad received his deportation letter and killed himself. He was tired of getting deported to other countries because of Dublin II. He killed himself because he didn't want to get deported again and again. Once again, we refugees tried to find out what happened and tried to talk to the security services and police, but they wouldn't answer: they said that everything is in order and there is no big problem. For them it is daily business that people kill themselves and they do not see any problem in this. Then we

decided to organize a demonstration against this system of federal police(Bundespolizei), federal ministry(Bundesamt), foreigners office(Ausländerbehörde), the security company BOSS, the injustice at the local court (Amtsgericht) and the Lager-system. All these institutions violate Human Rights.

The demonstration took place on 3rd of June. Refugees attacked the deportation center inside the Lager. They broke the doors, the gate and the barbed wire. We went to the city of Eisenhüttenstadt to demonstrate and then we came back to the Lager and some refugees in the deportation center asked us for help and we started to follow their cases. We found lawyers for them. Then we began to understand that we are inside a company which works like a **deportation machine**. The police just writes something and the court signs it. The police pressures the doctors to get people deported.

Many of the Refugees who took part in the demonstration were put under pressure and got criminalized by the Security Company BOSS and the Police. For example, one woman gave an interview to the TV of Brandenburg and then the security stopped giving food to her and her children. Afterwards she and her family was deported to Serbia. As they recognize me as an organizer, after the demonstration they went to my room, took all my stuff and told my friends that I was not allowed to stay in Germany anymore. According to my lawyer I understood that they were not allowed to do that. They only wanted to frighten me, but they didn't succeed.

On 5th of June 2013 there was another suicide attempt: M. D., a refugee from Somalia hung himself in his room. Another refugee and me saw him from our window. We went to cut the rope and saved his life. The next day we arranged an appointment for M. D. at the medical NGO Xenion and informed the private security company BOSS. Suddenly, to our big surprise, we saw the security guards drinking alcohol with our friend in his room. After this night our friend disappeared. We asked the security guards about him. They pretended that he just walked away. Since then we don't know anything about him. We realized, BOSS seems to be a police force. But it was too late.

On 8th of June 2013, P. M. from Kenya, got deported. He had been in Germany for 20 years, he was married to a German woman and had three children, some of them minor. The Ausländerbehörde refused to issue a German passport. Some Refugees failed to prevent the police from deporting him.

On 20th of June 2013 U., a refugee from Pakistan, was supposed to be deported to Hungary (Dublin II Regulations). Some supporters from Berlin came to Tegel airport and spread flyers. The refugee who was in the process of being deported stood up in the AirBerlin airplane and shouted, that he does not want to get deported and some of the passengers stood up and supported him in attempts to prevent the plane from taking off. So they stopped the deportation. He had to go to the court, again without his lawyer. The police said a lawyer was not required, because he would be deported anyway in three weeks and the court would merely sign the paper. And the court did so. It is illegal to take a court decision without a lawyer! Around the same time, the deportation machine wanted to deport a woman from Chechnya and her four children to Chechnya. She tried to hang herself in her cell. Her children started crying and she was eventually saved. We could not find out what happened to this family. They disappeared.

They are murderers. The deportation industry wanted to deport a Serbian family with a pregnant woman. But it's illegal to deport a four-month pregnant woman in an airplane. Security forces and police took her to the hospital and forced her to have an abortion. They said: "You have two children and you do not have enough money for them already, so you cannot afford a third child." So they killed it.

On 8th of July 2013, 14 refugees started a hungerstrike in the deportation centre of the Lager. We informed fellow activists and supporters in Berlin and together we set up a solidarity camp right in front of the Lager. The aim of our action was it, to avoid the deportations of our friends inside the deportation centre and to expose how this deportation machinery works. After three days, some refugee stopped drinking. Four days later, some refugees had to be taken to the hospital, because they were too weak to go on fighting. One of the hunger strike activists G., actually the one who started the hunger strike in the deportation centre, was also brought to hospital. After 17 days in hunger strike the police deported him to Georgia. We didn't know that our people would get deported from the hospital.

U., the refugee whose deportation was avoided in Tegel at 20th. of June and two other refugees got released from the deportation prison to the open Lager. But the eleven other striking refugees got deported.

After the hunger strike we organized parties for the children living in the Lager. We played music and tried to offer them a normal life. Ausländerbehörde and Bundesamt don't let them to have one, so we did it in an act of Solidarity. Then we planned a Solidarity party to celebrate the end of Ramadan, 9th of August. Indeed, most refugees in the camp are Muslim so we wanted to cook for them. But the security and Police refused to let us do. They told us, that we are not allowed to cook.

One of the refugees who took part in the hunger strike is J. A. from Nigeria. He had arrived in the deportation prison on 28th of June after spending 11 years in German Lagers. He had Hepatitis C and diabetes and urinated blood. On the 29th of July he got deported, because it was too expensive to provide his medical care. Moreover, since he had been in Germany for 11 years, he was entitled to get a legal residence status.

On 11th of December, a refugee from Afghanistan, after being arrested on the train Warsaw-Berlin at Frankfurt(Oder) on the way to apply for asylum, attempt to suicide in the deportation prison. He spent two months in the Psychiatric Hospital of Eisenhüttenstadt before they permitted him to make his asylum application.

On 23th of December 2013, a Tunisian refugee tried to commit suicide in the prison of the deportation center. He broke his head, no one knows how. He cut the veins of his arms and his legs. He stayed five days at the hospital and short time later he got deported to Italy (Dublin II Regulation). We went to visit him twice at the hospital and at the second time, we didn't meet him – he already got deported.

In January 2014, after experiencing many trouble with the officers of the Ausländerbehörde putting obstacles to visit the people in detention, a group of refugees and non-refugees activists decided to write an open Letter to the director of the deportation prison. They demand free access to the people in detention and told him clearly that the prison for refugees has no reason to exist and demanding that it has to be closed.

End of January 2014, Z.A. tried to commit suicide in the deportation prison. He was taken to hospital and then to the deportation prison in Grünau, Berlin. Then, unfortunately, we lost track of him.

On February, 12th 2014, a woman from Chechnya was deported to Poland. She had fled from her country because her father raped her. First, she had to come to Poland where her relatives live and had to ask for asylum and medical care. But there in Poland, the Chechen Community threatened to kill her, if she would tell the police that her father raped her. She fled to Germany where she was arrested and put into the deportation centre of Eisenhüttenstadt. The court decided that she was not entitled to apply for asylum in Germany. In the night before her deportation, she cut both of her veins. They just bandaged her wrists but did not provide further medical care. She refused to board the deportation van. Because of her wounds, handcuffs could not be used, so they wrapped her with a bed sheet and carried her by force into the van. A group of refugee activists and supporters tried to stop the deportation, but failed.

On the February the 24th 2014, the deportation of a Chechen refugee was scheduled. A group of activists stood there to prevent it, but the lawyer informed us that the deportation was postponed one day. But after some time he also got deported.

All these events happened within only a few months! But, sadly, this is daily life in the Lager and the deportation center.

Asif