

FlüchtlingsRAT NRWe.V.

Newsletter September 2016

Dear Reader!

In the September edition of our Newsletter we report on the police eviction of a church asylum in Münster last month. We further outline why the federal government of NRW is currently closing many reception facilities for refugees and explain the consequences of the so called Integrationsgesetz (Integration Act) for refugees in NRW. We further invite you to join our Ehrenamtspreis (volunteering award) ceremony on the 29th October in Essen.

If you have any comments, 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 [initiativen\(at\)fnnrw.de](mailto:initiativen(at)fnnrw.de).

Ehrenamtspreis (volunteering award) on the 20th of October

The arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees in the last years has encouraged many people to get active and show their solidarity with people seeking for asylum. In almost every city new "Refugees Welcome" action groups have emerged. Many of these, were spontaneously formed groups which have by now structured and professionalized their work. Further, the role of volunteers who have been active for decades in refugee support has been pivotal. They have greatly contributed with their experience and know-how. To honor this commitment, the Flüchtlingsrat NRW awards the *Ehrenamtspreis* this year for the first time. The award honors those, who have invested a tremendous amount of energy, passion and work in the last months and years and have thus filled the word "*Willkommenskultur*" (welcome culture) with life.

Out of the numerous action groups and individuals who proposed for the *Ehrenamtspreis*, we selected eight groups whose commitment has notably impressed us. Film students of the *Fachhochschule Dortmund* have visited and accompanied these eight groups for some time and documented their work in short films. These short films will be shown at the prize giving ceremony. The program will be supplemented with some cultural highlights and food and drinks will be available. In the evening we invite all guests to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Flüchtlingsrat NRW with a drink.

The award ceremony takes place on 29th October, starting at 15.30 pm in the Kulturzentrum Zeche Carl in Essen. If you would like to attend the event, please sign up until the 9th of October under [aktionen\(at\)fnnrw.de](mailto:aktionen(at)fnnrw.de).

Police evicts church asylum in Münster

On August 23, police force and employees of the *Ausländerbehörde* (foreigners' registration office) of the city of Coesfeld, forced access to a monastery in Münster to deport a refugee who was accommodated there. The 31-year-old man from Ghana was to be transferred to Hungary because he had already been registered there before his arrival in Germany. It is the first time in over ten years that authorities broke a church asylum in NRW.

Monasteries and parishes often grant protection against the deportation to refugees whose asylum application has been rejected and who are in a particular emergency. The number of church asylums has risen sharply in recent years – and with it also the conflicts with politics and administration. In most cases, however, the authorities refrain from confrontation with the churches. Consequently, Coesfeld's *Ausländerbehörde* has been harshly criticized for the eviction. "The eviction of a church asylum by the police is an absolute taboo," said Birgit Naujoks, the managing director of Flüchtlingsrat NRW. "Until recently, such an event would have been unthinkable in NRW." Flüchtlingsrat NRW sees a clear co-responsibility of the federal government of NRW for this development. The Ministry of the Interior had only recently announced that it would proceed yet more rigorously with rejected asylum seekers and increase the number of deportations significantly. Thus the government of NRW has greatly contributed "to allow that such measures become possible not only in the minds, but also in its actual implementation," said Naujoks.

The story of the Ghanaian refugee from Coesfeld has taken a happy turn despite the eviction: The Administrative Court of Münster has temporarily suspended the planned delivery to Hungary. The judges expressed doubts regarding the compatibility of the Hungarian asylum system complies with the European Convention on Human Rights. German authorities will now decide on the asylum application of the Ghanaian.

Flüchtlingsrat NRW: Unrühmlicher Gipfel der Abschiebungspolitik (24.08.2016)

Süddeutsche Zeitung: Von der Brutalität schockiert (24.08.2016)

NRW closes reception facilities for refugees

Within the next few months, the government of North Rhine-Westphalia plans on decreasing the number of places in reception facilities for refugees drastically – the so-called *EAEs* (*Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen*) and *ZUEs* (*Zentrale Unterbringungseinrichtungen*). Currently the refugee camps, which are administered by the federal government of NRW, have a total capacity of around 62,000 people, yet only half of the places are in use. Therefore, the state government wants to reduce its reception capacity to 35,000. Another 10,000 reception places will be at the government's disposal and can be installed on short notice. In addition, areas will be reserved where transitory reception facilities for 5,000 people could be established within a short time.

Last year, the federal government had established several new reception camps due to the high numbers of people seeking asylum in Germany. However, many camps were closed, because the number of asylum seekers have declined significantly in recent months. Since the East European countries have closed of the so-called Balkan route for refugees this spring, only few asylum seekers manage to reach Germany.

Bezirksregierung Arnsberg: Planungen des Landes für die Aufnahme und Unterbringung von Flüchtlingen (26.08.2016)

Kölner Stadtanzeiger: NRW baut fast jeden zweiten Erstaufnahmeplatz ab (26.08.2016)

Wohnsitzauflage (residency restraint) for recognized refugees causes resentment

Since the entry into force of the new *Integrationsgesetz*, municipalities have the possibility to impose residency restraints also on recognized refugees. This means that the persons affected cannot choose the city they want to live in, even after the conclusion of their asylum procedure. Instead, they must remain in the municipality in which they lived during the asylum procedure. Previously, such restrictions were only possible for people who were either still in the asylum procedure or whose asylum application had been rejected. In North Rhine-Westphalian municipalities, this new regulation is leading to chaos and causing resentment among the refugees affected. According to media reports, in several municipalities in the Ruhrarea refugees were already prompted to move out. Some of those affected want to complain against the forced relocation. Refugee organizations have criticized the new regulations as a disastrous step in integration policy. However, some North Rhine-Westphalian municipalities hope for saving in social spending through the *Wohnsitzauflage*.

Der Westen: Städte weisen anerkannte Flüchtlinge aus NRW aus (30.08.2016)

Flüchtlingsrat NRW: Wo müssen Flüchtlinge zukünftig wohnen?

Ministers of the Interior want to accelerate deportations to North Africa

As part of a joint pilot project, Germany's Minister of the Interior, Thomas de Maizière and his North Rhine-Westphalian counterpart Ralf Jäger, want to develop concepts to deport refugees from North Africa who have committed a criminal offence as quickly as possible. This was announced by the North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry of Inner Affairs in a press release in mid-August. The project should "also serve to identify existent problems in the implementation of deportations, to show up the faults with these examples at hand and to resolve them as quickly as possible".

Ministerium für Inneres und Kommunales: Straffällig gewordene Nordafrikaner müssen endlich schneller abgeschoben werden (12.08.2016)

German Government publishes deportation statistics

According to a report released by the German Government at the beginning of August, nearly 14,000 people were deported from Germany between January and June 2016. As it seems, the strong upward deportation trend of recent years is likely to continue this year. In 2015, 20,888 deportations were carried out, in 2014 the German Government reported 10,884 cases. Thereby, Düsseldorf Airport is increasingly becoming a deportation hub: in the first six months of 2016, 2,561 deportations were carried out at the airport of the North Rhine-Westphalian capital. Düsseldorf airport ranks only slightly behind Frankfurt airport, at which 2,807 deportations were recorded between January and June 2016. Most of the deportation were carried out to the Western Balkans, notably Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Syrian refugees - courts confirm political persecution

For some months now the *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge* – in short *BAMF* – (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) has started awarding most Syrian asylum seekers with a so-called subsidiary protection status instead of a refugee status. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection status have less rights and privileges, such as a longer waiting period for family reunification. Relatives of people with a subsidiary protection status can enter Germany only as of March 16, 2018. The *BAMF* justifies its decisions claiming that most Syrian refugees have “merely” fled from civil war without having to fear any individual political persecution. Apparently, some courts disagree. In mid-August the Administrative Court of Düsseldorf ruled, that a Syrian refugee who had filed a lawsuit against the decision of the *BAMF*, should in fact be attributed the refugee status. Because it is assumed that "the Syrian state regards the illegal departure as well as the stay in a western country and the application for asylum as an expression of a dissident conviction." Therefore, the asylum seeker must actually fear that the Assad regime will haunt him for political reasons, if he returns to Syria. He should consequently "be granted the refugee status", as clarified by the judge from Düsseldorf.

FAZ: Immer mehr Gerichte sprechen Syrern umfänglichen Schutz zu (26.08.2016)

Material for Refugees

Comic provides advice for the prevention of deportations

The action group “Refugee Movement” has published a comic book, which informs about different ways to prevent and delay deportations. This booklet covers topics such as church asylum, the loss of documents as well as acts of resistance during the deportation. The handbook addresses refugees and can be downloaded on the website on Arabic, English, Farsi, French, German, Romanes, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish and Turkish.

Comic-Broschüre „Stop Deportation“

Events *

10.09.-16.10.2016: Photo-exhibition „Die vergessenen Flüchtlinge Südosteuropas“. Werner-Jaeger-Halle, An den Sportplätzen 7, Nettetal.

For further information see www.judith-buethe.de

13.09.-04.10.2016: Training „German as a foreign language (Advanced) – Deutsch als Fremdsprache (Fortgeschrittene)“. Four appointments, every Tuesday at 6.00 pm, Haus des Kirchenkreises Gladbach-Neuss, Hauptstraße 200, Mönchengladbach.

For further information see www.philippus-akademie.de

14.09.-05.10.2016: Training „German as a foreign language (Beginners) – Deutsch als Fremdsprache (Neueinsteiger)“. Four appointments, every Wednesday at 6.00 pm, Haus des Kirchenkreises Gladbach-Neuss, Hauptstraße 200, Mönchengladbach.

For further information see www.philippus-akademie.de

21.09.2016: Lecture „Asyl- und Flüchtlingsberatung in Lünen“. 5.30 pm, Bildungswerk Multi Kulti, Münsterstr. 46b, Lünen.

Registration here [wb\(ät\)multikulti-forum.de](mailto:wb@multikulti-forum.de)

23.09.2016: Training „Antisemitismus in der Migrationsgesellschaft als Herausforderung der politischen Bildungsarbeit“. 10.00 am, Geschäftsstelle von BÜNDNIS 90/Die Grünen, Ebertplatz 23, Köln.

For further information see www.koelnische-gesellschaft.de

27.09.2016: Lecture „Flüchtlingsarbeit konkret“. 9.30 am, Haus Landeskirchliche Dienste, Graf Recke-Straße 209, Düsseldorf.

For further information see www.philippus-akademie.de

29.09.2016: Seminar „Argumentationshilfen gegen Stammtischparolen“. 6.00 pm, Freiwilligenbörse, Dorfstraße 13, Sprockhövel

Registration here [fluechtlingsunterstuetzung\(ät\)caritas-en.de](mailto:fluechtlingsunterstuetzung@caritas-en.de)

30.09.2016: Exchange and networking meeting of the NRW Green Party on the topic „Integration und Asylrecht in NRW gestalten“. 3.00 pm, Landtag, Platz des Landtags 1, Düsseldorf.

For further information see www.monika-dueker.de

29.10.2016: *Ehrenamtspreis* Award of the Flüchtlingsrat NRW. 3.30 pm. Kulturzentrum Zeche Carl, Wilhelm-Nieswandt-Allee 100, Essen.

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

*Most of the events are in German language.

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