

REFUGEE TRIBUNAL AGAINST THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

UNITED AGAINST COLONIAL INJUSTICE - BERLIN - 2013

July 5, 2013

- **Refugees from all over Germany came together despite various sorts of repression**
- **The Federal Republic of Germany is accused of causing flight and misery and punishing those who survive with deportation**
- **Documentation of the accusations and proclamations within the refugee communities and in civil society**

From June 13th to June 16th 2013 we, refugees and migrants from all districts of Germany and members of different networks and organisations, gathered in Berlin and publicly accused the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) at the International Refugee's Tribunal.

The Refugee's Tribunal was an expression and a result of the on-going struggles of refugees and migrants, not only in Germany. Besides representatives of the local and regional refugee communities, activists from other countries were present too. Also, members of various networks and organisations strengthened the tribunal by their cooperation and participation. Members of Afrique-Europe Interact, AGIF (Federation of Immigrant Workers in Germany), ARACEM (Association of Re-deported People from Central African Countries in Mali), Initiative Christy Schwundek, Initiative in Remembrance of Oury Jalloh, SKB (Socialist Women's Union), IMA (International Migrant Alliance), Sudanese Initiative for the Pursuit of Justice (SIPJ), THE VOICE Refugee Forum, Welcome to Europe, Women in Exile and Women Space Berlin helped to make the tribunal a success through their contributions as well as through helping with organisational matters.

The network of the Caravan Refugee women movement, which was established at the Refugee Women's conference in April, opened the tribunal on June 13th with a women's demonstration. Workshops for women and a women's accusation block have confirmed the will of our sisters to strengthen their position within the movement further and speed up the self-empowerment of women.

We are here because you destroy our countries!

The accusations against the Federal Republic of Germany that were brought forward on the square Mariannenplatz in Berlin-Kreuzberg by individuals and communities showed clearly the different aspects of Germany's deadly refugee policy by means of concrete examples. The accusers gave evidence of the way that the FRG's aggressive foreign policy and the actions of German companies forced people to flee. Exploitation, repression, militarisation and wars are again carried out into the world by German imperialism - to Afghanistan, Northern Africa, Sudan or Turkey. If people oppose or resist the exploitation, the destruction of their environment or the oppression in their countries, they are confronted with repression machineries that are trained and supported by - amongst others - the German government and armed by German arms manufacturers and companies. If they flee from the places where their lives are not safe anymore, they run into borders and security fences that are build up and financed by German government and companies in service to Frontex, the border control agency. This European border control agency is supposed to keep the victims of the misery caused by Germany and other former colonial powers away from Europe. Frontex - the deadly agency

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for the rejection of refugees – is not only operating on Europe's borders, but also beyond the European continent. It participates in the consolidation of a control machinery to contain the forced migration.

The accusations that were brought forward on the Refugee's Tribunal concerning the foreign policy of Germany and the economical interventions of German companies are summarised below. The accusations will be published in detail and with explanations in the upcoming documentation and will be made accessible for interested individuals and organisations. Here is a summary of the accusations that were brought forward:

- The Federal Republic of Germany is accused of destroying our countries by plundering crude materials in our countries of origin, by exploiting our labour force, by working with dictatorships, by training members of the army and police in our countries and by interfering economically and politically.
- The FRG is accused of participation in the wars in Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan.
- The FRG is accused of supporting the occupation of Palestine financially and through arms deliveries.
- The FRG is accused of being involved in
 - the oppression and murder of the population in Sudan;
 - the oppression of the opposition in Turkey;
 - the oppression of the Kurdish people;
 - the destruction of the Syrian society;
 - the oppression of the opposition in Iran;
 - the destruction of Libya through NATO.
- The FRG is accused of, together with the EU, not taking responsibility for the victims of the war in Libya, which is waged by the NATO and others. Rather than being accepted in EU countries, refugees from sub-Saharan countries are held in reception camps like Choucha in North Africa. This is supported by the EU.
- The FRG is accused of having paid 600,000 Euros to enforce the so-called integration of Libyan refugees in Tunisia, even though it is known that sub-Saharan refugees have no rights in Tunisia and are also threatened by racist violence.
- The FRG is accused of being - together with the EU - responsible for the growing xenophobia between the various peoples in North African countries.
- The FRG is accused of putting pressure upon Tunisia and other North African countries to prevent refugees from travelling on to Europe. EU money is used to equip border police forces of the countries in questions for this purpose.
- We accuse the FRG of militarising Africa through Frontex and of murdering refugees at the outer borders of Europe.
- The FRG is accused of having played an important part in implementing the so-called Dublin II Regulation and carrying out huge amounts of deportations within Europe based on this law. Therefore, the Federal Republic of Germany violates our right to freedom of movement and free choice of residence.
- The FRG is accused of carrying out deportations to neighbouring countries in Europe, even though it is aware that, for example, in Italy we will have to live a life unworthy of human beings, sleeping rough and deprived of medical care, and in Hungary we will be kept in prison merely because we tried to find protection in Europe.
- The FRG is accused of forcing many of our friends to hurt themselves by burning their fingers with acid to escape finger printing. The finger print is a prison that is burned into our bodies, where all of our movements are watched through the Eurodac database.

Deportation and Exclusion are Pivotal Goals of German Refugee Policy

On the second day of the tribunal, June 14th 2013, the accusations made by the refugee communities from camps and from migrant organisations showed and proved how our lives, refugees' lives, were being destroyed. The evidence clearly demonstrated the violation of fundamental rights. On the second day, the accusers from the various isolation camps called for a period of silence for

the most recent victims of the deportation system. They lost their lives in the isolation camps because their fundamental needs such as health care were denied, or because, afraid of being deported into misery, they took their own lives. It was stated that the central crime against refugees was deportation, including all of the means of exclusion connected to it: isolation camps, „Residenzpflicht“ (residence obligation), coupons instead of cash, prohibition of work, police controls. Concrete examples of racist police violence were given: the cases of Christy Omordion Schwundek, Layé Alama Konde and Oury Jalloh. The initiatives did not only accuse the police, but also all of the government institutions and partly government institutions that were, and still are, involved in hushing up and maintaining the racist situation.

The accusations that were brought forward concerning the FRG's refugee policy are summarised below:

- The FRG is accused of terrorising refugees through deportations and torturing them through deportation prisons.
- The FRG is accused of having abolished the political asylum, permanently violating the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and not acknowledging women-specific flight reasons.
- The FRG is accused of splitting up and destroying families.
- The FRG is accused of denying refugees language courses, enforcing prohibitions of work and criminalising refugees by taking their finger prints.
- The FRG is accused of making deportation agreements with Nigeria, Syria and other countries.
- The FRG is accused of exerting permanent control and isolation on refugees through restrictions on their residence („Residenzpflicht“, “residence obligation” law).
- The FRG is accused of enforcing the system of isolation camps, thus
 - o knowingly isolating refugees in camps;
 - o allowing violence against women and children in camps;
 - o traumatising refugees;
 - o endangering refugees' lives by denying them health care;
 - o humiliating refugees through employing coupons and food parcels.
- The FRG is accused of stigmatising and criminalising refugees and allowing and perpetrating their persecution using various methods.
- The FRG is accused of enforcing racist police controls and police violence.
- The FRG is accused of prohibiting political activities of refugees in exile.
- The FRG is accused of double discrimination against women refugees.
- The FRG is accused of violating our universal human rights and dignity.

We Can't Compromise with the System of Exploitation and Deportation

The refugee tribunal with all its accusations presented makes it seem likely that compromise between the refugees and the German government is impossible. The companies based in Germany, the financial elites connected to them and their instruments in the government will not give up trying to make profit, not today and not tomorrow. They will continue to look for opportunities anywhere in the world where labour is cheap, environmental restrictions are insufficient and protection in the workplace is negligible. They will be active anywhere in the world where there are materials and usable land, initiating or aggravating conflicts. Thus, they will continue to be one of the factors that force people to leave the place where they happened to be born. However, refugees are not allowed into Europe where the wealth has accumulated - that is the reason for Frontex, for Europe's closing off against refugees, for the deportation of those who managed to immigrate against all odds. That's the reason for the repression and terror against those who resist the oppressive system in their countries of origin as well as Germany. The refugee tribunal showed yet again that the capitalist system is barbaric because it destroys the majority of people and their living spaces on this planet. If we don't defend ourselves, our last living spaces and even our lives will be taken from us.

Our Self-Organisation and the Intensification of Social Struggles

The refugee tribunal clearly showed people's awareness established through decades of fighting colonialism and of the refugees' decades of struggle in Germany. It also demonstrated the strength of the refugee resistance against all forms of colonial injustice. In spite of police controls, threats of imprisonment against refugee activists, threats of deportation and punishment according to so-called anti-terror laws, more than 500 people came to the public tribunal in Berlin and presented their testimonies.

It was decided in the final plenary that in order to strengthen the self-organisation of refugee and migrant communities, the results of the tribunal would be elaborately documented in writing and a film and then be spread in refugee and migrant communities throughout the next year. The purpose of the documentation is partly to show the courage of those who have already accused the FRG, partly to encourage other refugee and migrant groups to formulate their own requests and participate in the continuation of the tribunal. Additionally, the public accusations are a distinct signal to the accused parties: they cannot hide; they cannot conceal their deeds, and they cannot carry out their crimes secretly and without the public knowing.

The documentation will also be used to contact activists from the civil society as well as professional associations and ask them to study, analyse and, from their own point of view, assess the accusations that were brought forward in the refugee tribunal.

Depending on further developments of the discussion after the accusations have been collected, it will be decided in what form the judgement will be made. Regional contact persons and a tribunal committee will be named, and a meeting to decide on further steps will be called.

Individual accusations can be sent to the following e-mail address: charge@refugeetribunal.org

We call for a common struggle against oppression, exploitation and war.

Our solidarity is our strength!

The 2013 Refugee Tribunal against the Federal Republic of Germany

www.thecaravan.org

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You are welcome to contact us and let us know about your ideas, suggestions and wishes.

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