



Press Review on Asylum Policy, November 2017

Compiled by Mark Gärtner

gaertner@sprev.de

Since it's simply less work to just copy-paste them,
dates follow the German notification (dd.mm.yy)

News:

A Look to Europe and the World

- *CNN* has published a video which shows the sale of twelve human beings as slaves in Tripolis, Libya. African Union termed the allegations as despicable, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights accused European Union of contributing to that situation. Its policy would be inhumane. Those who fund Libyan coast guard make even more people to prisoners in the camps of Libya. UN General Secretary António Guterres speaks of human rights violations and uses the legal term of crimes against humanity. The video caused some political pressure in the aftermath. Even though conditions in the prisoners' camps are well known to international community for quite some time now, EU representative for foreign affairs, Federica Mogherini sees a "window of opportunity" just now. The issue became a topic at EU-Africa-Summit in November. Ruandan government announced to let in 30,000 refugees who are in Libya now. After EU-Africa-Summit, the states agreed to "evacuate" the prisoners' camps. This euphemism describes deportations to the countries where people escaped from. Or it means returns to third-countries such as Chad or Niger, which situation is assessed as "stable". There it will be decided if reception in Europe is possible. PRO ASYL sees an ever further isolation of Europe. Amnesty International calls the planned evacuations not realistic. It's neither known how many people are in the camps nor does Libyan government have control over all camps. It is also not clear how many people at all wait for their further escape in Libya. Estimated numbers reach from 400,000 to a million. Libyan Prime Minister Fajis al-Sarradsch ensured to be helpful when it comes to deportations, but most camps are controlled by militias.
<http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2017-11/libyen-menschenhandel-fluechtlinge-untersuchungskommission> (19.11.17)
<http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2017-11/fluechtlinge-libyen-cnn-sklavenhandel-eu-federica-mogherini-afrikanische-union-un-sicherheitsrat> (23.11.17)
<http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/fluechtlinge-im-mittelmeer-libyens-verwaltete-instabilitaet-20638054.html> (27.11.17)
<http://www.dw.com/de/amnesty-international-evakuierung-libyscher-fl%C3%BChtlinge-unrealistisch/a-41614811> (01.12.17)
<https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/politik/ausland/eu-afrika-libyen-migranten-rueckfuehrung-100.html> (30.11.17)

- In front of Greek parliament, refugees protested. Their demand: being reunited with their family members who are in Germany already. 14 of them went to hunger strike. Greece and Germany agreed upon limiting family reunification in the framework of the Dublin-III-regulations. The regulation states that families within the EU need to be reunited within six months. *Deutschlandfunk* quotes a mother of three kids who has been waiting for reunification with her husband for three years now.
http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/gefluechtete-in-griechenland-hungerstreik-fuer-eine.795.de.html?dram:article_id=399944 (06.11.17)
- The people living in Lesbos called for a general strike. All agencies and shops were closed for one day in November. The people wanted to point out the circumstances the refugees on Lesbos have to endure. 8,300 people are on the island right now, the camps' capacities suffice for 3,244 people. Alone in Moria camp, 6,500 people live. It was built for 2,330 people. 40 percent are kids, among them unaccompanied ones. Many other people live in tents in the surroundings. Whole families share two-men-tents. According to the Greek government, the situation cannot be eased right now. EU-Turkey-Deal would forbid that people could leave the island before a decision on their asylum request was made. Only, asylum procedures often last more than a year. In the first two weeks of November, 1,310 people arrived in Lesbos.
Later in November, Greek government decided to transfer 3,000 people from the islands Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros and Kos to the mainland.
<http://www.fr.de/politik/fluechtlinge-generalstreik-auf-lesbos-a-1391319> (19.11.17)
[ueberfuellten-lagern-nach-athen-gebracht.ac296ea0-738d-4896-88e0-a46c12622824.html](http://www.ueberfuellten-lagern-nach-athen-gebracht.ac296ea0-738d-4896-88e0-a46c12622824.html) (30.11.17)
- Since they feared attacks by local population, 400 refugees refused to leave the camp on Manus island, Papua New Guinea where they were incarcerated for years. Australia paid Papua New Guinea to hold refugees in those camps so that they could not continue their escape. The Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea then ruled to close the camps with their inhumane conditions. Now, Australian government funded the building of new camps. Amnesty International called upon Australia to receive the refugees. In a couple of Australian cities, people demonstrated against that policy of isolation.
<http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2017-11/papua-neuguinea-australien-fluechtlingcamp-raeumung-polizei> (23.11.17)
<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/manus-polizei-zwingt-alle-fluechtlinge-zum-verlassen-des-camps-a-1180059.html> (24.11.17)
- Israeli government wants to deport around 40,000 refugees, mostly of Eritrean or Sudanese citizenship, to third countries. According to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, 20,000 people were deported already after Israel registered more immigration in the years of 2010 to 2012. On the Egyptian-Israeli-border, a fence was built which reduced the number of the newly arriving to almost zero. Refugee status is rarely given. UNHCR showed itself "deeply worried". Israel would be bound to Geneva Refugee Convention and thereby to the protection of refugees.
<http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2017-11/israel-benjamin-netanjahu-fluechtlinge-abschieben-asympolitik> (19.11.17)
- More than 620,000 people escaped from Myanmar to Bangladesh now. Both states agreed upon a return to Myanmar. It is not clear if the people of the Rohingya minority even want that.
<http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2017-11/myanmar-bangladesch-rohingya-fluechtlinge-einigung-rueckfuehrung> (23.11.17)
- EU has calculated a "ratio of returnees". The number of deportations and "voluntary returns" are put into relation to the number of negative asylum decisions. Germany has a ratio of 106 % in 2016 and is thereby first among EU-member-states. A minor request by

Left Party showed furthermore, that 39,000 people were deported from Germany between January and September 2017. 35,000 decisions of BAMF became legal in the same time. Ulla Jelpke, Member of Bundestag for The Left, points out that one cannot speak of a deficit when it comes to deportations.

<http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2017-11/abschiebungen-fluechtlinge-asyl-deutschland> (25.11.17)

Federal, State and Municipality Level

- Bavarian and Saxon ministers of the interior, Joachim Herrmann and Markus Ulbig, suggested to the Annual Conference of the Ministers of the Interior, to deport to Syria. Once condition that would need to be fulfilled: a new security report on Syria, published by the Federal Ministry of the Interior. Last report comes from the year of 2012. But it could be difficult to draft it: German embassy in Damascus is closed. Officially, only the embassies in Ankara and Beirut report to Federal Government about any security related events in Syria. Herrmann's and Ulbig's suggestion is challenged by their own party even. Head of Chancellors' Office, Peter Altmaier and Head of the Union's Faction in Bundestag, Volker Kauder, spoke out against deportations to Syria.
<http://www.dw.com/de/syrien-ende-des-abschiebestopps/a-41581783> (29.11.17)
http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/fluechtlinge-unionspolitiker-uneins-ueber-abschiebungen.1939.de.html?drn:news_id=822876 (03.12.17)
<http://www.migazin.de/2017/12/01/nrw-innenminister-fuer-abschiebungen-nach-syrien/> (01.12.17)
- On October 23rd, the Federal Government should have reported on the security situation in the so-called "Safe Countries of Origin" to Bundestag. It is obliged to do so every two years in order to enable a possible revision of the list. According to the government itself, the report is still in process. The Left speaks of an affront towards parliament. The date was set for two years already. The party demands that reports of human rights organizations are included to the Federal Government's security assessment. Nowadays, only reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and official asylum statistics are used. By adding NGOs' reports, one could speak of a serious monitoring.
<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/asylpolitik-lagebericht-vertroedelt-1.3742684> (09.11.17)
- The ministers of the interior of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia and Brandenburg already met in November and agreed upon cooperating with detention for the purpose of deportation. Thereby, refugees from other states could find themselves in the planned detention center in Dresden.
<http://www.maz-online.de/Brandenburg/Ost-Laender-wollen-bei-Abschiebung-kooperieren> (21.11.17)
- Up to 3,000 Euro are paid to families who decide to "return voluntarily" after receiving a negative asylum decision. That would be possible from December to February next year. The program "Starthilfe plus" that started this year already and which was extended now was not widely used by refugees already. Only 8,639 people returned by it. PRO ASYL's executive director, Günter Burkhardt, criticized the program. Especially the "bonus" for those who "return voluntarily" before their asylum request is decided is a scandal.
<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/asylpolitik-angebot-fuer-rueckkehrer-1.3776563> (03.12.17)
<https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/politik/inland/extra-zuschuss-bei-freiwilliger-ausreise-von-abgelehnten-asylbewerbern-100.html> (03.12.17)
http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/asylbewerber-kritik-an-neuer-ausreisepraemie.1939.de.html?drn:news_id=822853 (03.12.17)
- Anti-Discrimination Office Saxony had proved by testing, that landlords keep apartments from being rented to refugees and other people affected by racism. The apartments were still available but landlords openly claimed that they would prefer people with German passports. Another excuse: schedule problems. The Equal Treatment Law prohibits such

practices. Racist discrimination on the housing markets contributes to collective accommodation of refugees. They cannot move to their own flat even though decentralized living is cheaper and makes integration possible. Especially rural areas lack explanation why they do not back on housing in apartments exclusively. Meißen county goes forward. It's county parliament decided on closing all camps. Counties such as Sächsische-Schweiz Osterzgebirge or Görlitz follow contrarily the trend of centralization. SFR raised the question if such counties actually want refugees' participation in social live.

<https://www.freiepresse.de/NACHRICHTEN/SACHSEN/Geschlossene-Gesellschaft-Schwierige-Wohnungssuche-fuer-Fluechtlinge-artikel10050575.php> (11.11.17)

- Mother and daughter of the family that was separated in Dresden Hechtviertel due to deportation in September were not granted a residence permit by Saxon Hardship Commission. The commission evaluates humanitarian and personal hardships. A majority of the members did not see those hardships as given in the case of the mother and the daughter that was born in Germany. In the night of September 18th to September 19th, father and both sons were deported to Armenia. Saxon Refugee Council criticized the agencies for their conscious deception of the family.
<http://www.sz-online.de/nachrichten/kommission-stimmt-fuer-abschiebung-3820496.html> (17.11.17)

Background and Opinion

- Yasmin Polat and Pascale Müller from *taz* report on violent securities, employed in collective accommodations and first reception centers. They mistreat refugees and shout at them. A case that occurred in the first reception center Hamburger Straße in Dresden is instanced as well. More than 20 cases were collected by the journalists. Only in five cases the responsible persons were fired, only six times criminal complaints concerning coercion, injuries or rape. Advice centers for victims and refuge councils describe that relation as typical. The people accommodated would often fear the consequences of a criminal complaint.

Dresden first reception center is operated by European Homecare, a company from Essen. According to its own spokesperson, the company is the "Aldi among accomodation suppliers". In Burbach in NRW, security staff and EHC employees abused and jailed refugees. Boots on the neck and "problem rooms" were things that happened. The main legal process dealing with that crimes has not started yet. In Finnentrop in NRW, a camp director raped a women. Before, he was known to police due to 19 criminal offenses already. The people in the accommodations are often not believed to, says RAA Advice Center for Victims of Racist Violence in Dresden. Injuries often fail to have penalty consequences – neither legally nor at work. Despite all allegations, European Homecare flourishes. Besides NRW and Saxony, also Lower Saxony made contracts with the company.

In sum, there is a lack of transparency when it comes to tendering operating agreements. Often, there are no mandatory standards and if there are some, they can hardly be controlled. A supra-regional complaint center was established in NRW in the meantime. It is connected to the refugee council there. Often, the different states try to get tasks back. Working together with private companies and welfare organizations would still be necessary in the future. But it could only be ensured by control mechanisms.

<http://www.taz.de/!5460056/> (13.11.17)

- The Dublin-System never worked from its very beginning on. It was "born out of the thought, that the arrival of a refugee in Europe equals misuse". Says Constantin Hruschka from Max-Planck-Institut in *Frankfurter Rundschau*. When Dublin IV comes, asylum requests could be procedured outside of Europe. EU commission plans to enact directives. They would be binding, i.e. they would apply to EU member states directly without the need to transfer them into national law.

<http://www.fr.de/politik/flucht-zuwanderung/dublin-iv-asylrecht-soll-weiter-ausgehebelt-werden-a-1382068> (07.11.17)

- 700 people wait to continue their escape in the Serbian reception camp in Obrenovac. All want to continue along Balkan route. Some have tried 25 times already to cross the border to Croatia, Hungary or Romania. Whenever they failed they returned with wounds and supercooled. They get medical treatment and try again. A man of Somali citizenship celebrated his 18th birthday last year in Lesbos, Greece. His 19th he celebrated in Obrenovac. 5,00 people more are in Serbia right now, waiting to escape up north. Report by Thomas Roser of *Zeit*.
<http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2017-10/fluechtlinge-balkanroute-psychische-probleme-depression-stress-angstzustaende> (01.11.17)
- *ARD*-magazine *Panorama* researched to passport traders. Special companies cooperate with states who sale their respective citizenship - "citizenship by investment". Cypriot citizenship can be bought for two million Euro, Portugese one can be afforded for 500,000 Euro already. The super rich are now able to buy a couple of citizenships like a good. Armand Arton is the boss of the "Global Citizen Forum", one of the companies organizing the pass trade. He owns six different passports. According to his estimation, the trade brings around seven billion Euro to Europe. Most of the "investors" would buy luxury properties afterwards. Critique also points out the fact that some people bought passports who became delinquent due to money laundering or corruption.
http://daserste.ndr.de/panorama/archiv/2017/passhandel128_page-1.html (23.11.17)

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Dammweg 5
01097 Dresden
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Refugee Law Clinic Leipzig
Burgstraße 27
04109 Leipzig
Email: pr@rlcl.de

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