

# We claim: everyone stays! alle bleiben!

We claim a right of residence! No deportations of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians to Kosovo!



In summer 2009 the German government started to deport refugees back to Kosovo, which have been living in Germany on an uncertain residence permit status for a long time. The deportations are expected to increase, since the government signed a treaty with Kosovo about the take over of the Kosovar citizens on 14/04/2010. It is intended to deport up to 14.000 people, amongst them are old and sick people as well as children. About 10.000 of them belong to the Roma minority. Most of them have been living in Germany for more than ten years now and many of their children were born and raised in Germany. Just few of those children, that are attending kindergarten and school are able to speak Albanian or Serbian. Now they are threatened with a deportation to an alien country, where their legal certainty is not guaranteed and the inhabitants might be hostile against them. Therefore their chances to attend school and contract friendships are quite low. In many cases those circumstances lead to isolation and depression up to suicide.

650 years of peaceful Roma-culture in Kosovo were destroyed by the conflicts in the 1990s that came along with pillages and expulsion. 120.000 of the 150.000 Roma left their homes in Kosovo and fled to the European countries to find protection. Thousands of them became inland refugees, mostly in Serbia and Montenegro.



This building without running water, heating and power supply is occupied by Roma. There are not even windows. The house doesn't belong to the family itself, for that reason they don't get any support for maintaining it and might have to leave suddenly. Just one tiny and windowless room is protected provisional with canvas cover against the rain. Nobody is employed; the only source of income is the collection of rubbish. The stories the people have to tell are characterized by expulsion, rape and murder.

## What can be expected by the deported Roma?

In many cases, the former family property like land and buildings is destroyed or in the use of other people. To reclaim it is difficult due to lost documents or to the circumstance that the Roma encounter threats of violence and therefore refrain from legal actions. Police and courts are in many cases powerless and act reluctant against the offences. Hence many Roma have to face arbitrariness, violence and harassments without any protection.

Repatriates and inland refugees in Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro are living isolated from the majority population, in barracks without decent water supply and heating. Their settlements are partly arranged on waste dumps or on polluted territory.

The Roma are confronted with racial discrimination in Kosovo. Apart from that, they are accused of helping the Serbs with the expulsion and assassination of the Albanians. This discrimination exerts influence on every single part of life. Roma barely have the possibility to find a regular job. A lot of them have to collect rubbish to survive. Children don't attend school, because they don't have documents or the delivery of those papers is averted. In other cases, the parents don't allow them to go to school to protect them from discrimination by classmates and teachers. Another reason is that the family needs the children to work and depends on their earnings. The few children that attend school complain of daily affronts and floggings due to their minority affiliation. Many are in

separate forms and treated as low ability pupils. Furthermore, the access to public health care and social benefits in case of unemployment or disease is impeded. Due to the high percentage of unemployed Roma (almost 100%) hardly anyone can afford consultations and medicine. Those illnesses, which are regarded as harmless in Germany can become quickly a financial problem and a danger to life.

If all those arguments are taken into consideration it stands to reason, that the Roma are afraid of being deported and would do just everything to stay. Some families disappeared to escape the deportations. It shows that they rather live illegal and without any rights than in far worse living conditions in Kosovo.

In March a team consisting of members of Roma Center Göttingen e.V. and Amaro Drom e.V. had the chance to visit the Kosovo and to get an idea of the situation for Roma. The journey affirmed that the disastrous circumstances continue and relief projects rarely get to the deserving.



The refugee camp Cesmin Lug is situated on lead-poisoned ground, 42 Roma families are living here. After their expulsion they were meant to stay just temporarily but now they've been living here for more than ten years. The conditions must be considered as harmful to their health. Especially children absorb the heavy metal easily and are seriously affected by the intoxication, which can be perilous. The recommendations to close the camp and to arrange a detoxication were ignored.

### **An improvement of the situation is anything but not in sight!**

It's not possible for Roma to live in safety and dignity in Kosovo. The "reintegration" of the thousands deported Roma seems to be illusive with this background. Independent observers like the UNHCR or the EU commissioner of human rights evaluate the situation consistently as critical and appealed to the government to stop the deportations. Serbia is also not regarded as an alternative for the Kosovo-Roma.

Even representatives of the Kosovar government point to the poor situation of the Roma, which could be aggravated in the view of the expected Roma that return under constraint.

Regarding the history of persecution and assassination of Roma during the Nazi-Regime, those conditions are unbearable. A more sensitive way of interacting with the minority should go without saying! There is a need for a right of residence, which allows the Roma to fully participate in the German society.

All-around Germany you find organizations that want to put through the right of residence for Roma and therefore co-operate nationwide under the slogan "alle bleiben!". To become more active and to present our concern at the conference of the Federal Ministry of the Interior on 18/19<sup>th</sup> November, we need support from you as an individual or your organization.

The campaign **alle bleiben!** is already supported by:

- Projekt Roma Center Göttingen e.V.
- Amaro Drom e.V.
- Romano Drom e.V.
- Romane Aglonipe - Roma aus Niedersachsen e.V.
- Ushten Chavalen
- Sinti und Roma Forum
- Alianta Civica a Romilor din Romania
- Chachipe a.s.b.l.
- Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma
- Verband Deutscher Sinti und Roma e.V. Landesverband Rheinland-Pfalz

- Roma Support Project Netzwerk Flüchtlingshilfe und Menschenrechte e.V.
- PRO ASYL
- Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste e.V.
- Jugendliche ohne Grenzen
- Dienstagsplenum Göttingen
- Kinder Kinder e.V.
- Flüchtlingsrat Bremen e.V.
- Flüchtlingsrat Sachsen-Anhalt e.V.
- Flüchtlingsrat Berlin e.V.
- Antirassistische Gruppe Polypol, Bremen
- kargah e.V.
- AMFN e.V. Arbeitsgemeinschaft MigrantInnen und Flüchtlinge in Niedersachsen
- Niedersächsischer Flüchtlingsrat e.V.
- Leben in der Fremde e.V.
- Göttinger Arbeitskreis zur Unterstützung von Asylsuchenden e.V.
- Institut für angewandte Kulturforschung e.V.
- Bürengruppe Paderborn
- stopdeportation.net freedom of movement is everybody's right!
- Femko
- Cafe Kabale Göttingen
- Aktion 302 Münster
- DJO Niedersachsen
- IIK e.V. - Initiative für ein Internationales Kulturzentrum
- Romà Onlus - Associazione di Promozione Sociale
- Zukunftswerkstatt e.V.
- Projektwerkstatt Hildesheim e.V.
- Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband Niedersachsen e.V.
- MediNetzBonn e.V.
- Integrationsrat Göttingen
- EUROPEANS FOR PEACE
- balkanbiro
- cinemanda
- Federació d'Associacions Gitanes de Catalunya

and others ...