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Germany: Largest ever mass deportation of refugees to Afghanistan

In the wake of the recent reactionary deal struck by the German grand coalition—Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Christian Social Union (CSU), Social Democratic Party (SPD)—the government is expanding its terror against refugees. In the early hours of July 4, 69 refugees were deported to Afghanistan. The Lufthansa flight from Munich to Kabul was the largest ever mass deportation of refugees to Afghanistan.

All of the parliamentary parties, including the opposition Greens and the Left Party, share responsibility for this criminal action. Fifty-one refugees were deported from Bavaria, while the remaining 18 came from Berlin, Hesse, Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Württemberg, Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. In most of these states, the Greens are involved in government. In Berlin and Thuringia, the Left Party is part of the administration and has once again demonstrated that it is capable of deporting migrants as brutally as the other Bundestag parties.

In Afghanistan, citizens are confronted on a daily basis with violence, torture and death. The situation in the country, occupied for 17 years by NATO and torn apart by the war, is deteriorating rapidly. This is confirmed by a number of official reports issued by the German Foreign Office.

The German government has been forced to admit this. A government statement from February 2018 to the Bundestag stated: “In Afghanistan, there is fierce fighting and bombings on a daily basis with numerous civilian deaths.” Such “excessive violence” prevails not only in areas dominated by Taliban and ISIS militias, but also in those regions

ruled by the puppet government in Kabul. This was confirmed by a United Nations report on torture that states that no area in Afghanistan can be classified as safe.

Previously deportations were limited to those regarded as “potentially dangerous” or those “refusing to integrate,” but now even this official restriction has been repealed. In reply to a question at the beginning of June, Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) stated: “In our view, the restrictions have been dropped.” The only concrete reason given for the latest deportations is the claim that “following the major attack of last year the German embassy in Kabul is once again able to better conduct its work.”

Wednesday’s mass deportation involved no less than 134 police officers, while the preparations for the deportations involved major police operations in the respective federal states.

The authorities acted with great brutality. Many of those affected were awoken in the early morning hours of Wednesday, taken into custody and placed directly on a plane in Munich, without being able to pack belongings or say a goodbye. In Bavaria, 21 people had been detained some days earlier. In a press release, Bavarian Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann (CSU) proudly announced that the remaining 30 victims in Bavaria were “apprehended by the Bavarian police so early to prevent them evading deportation.”

The Bavarian Refugee Council has criticised the state administration and its interior minister for their use of “a sledgehammer against refugees.” The organisation lists a number of cases in which students and apprentices, full-time employees and even sick people were deported. It writes that the state government is even deporting “well-integrated people and young adults from youth welfare institutions.”

According to the BRC report, one of the deportees was a juvenile apprehended on his way to an apprentice school, while another trainee was arrested at a therapeutic education facility and then deported. Another victim has been living in Germany for seven years and had had a permanent employment contract for the past five years. Yet another was handed over to the police while receiving treatment at the Gauting Psychiatric Clinic in Starnberg. Also noteworthy is the case of Esam from Munich. The 27-year-old speaks German and had commenced an internship at a Munich bakery at the end of 2017. His employer, who was very satisfied with Esam’s work, wanted to hire him as an apprentice, but the immigration office delayed approval of his training contract for nearly half a year. Esam was among the group that has been deported.

A reporter who was able to speak to several of the deported men in Kabul on Wednesday documented the tragic stories of a number of other victims. Among those deported was

Ahmed Hussain, 28, originally from Wardak, an unstable province in Afghanistan. He had worked as a guard and pizza chef in Germany for six years, during which time he paid taxes. Mohammad Nasar from Nangarhar, aged just 21, was another of those roused by police in the early morning hours and then immediately deported.

The only “offence” of all these people is that they failed to obtain asylum from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Instead, they have been subject to absurd and cynical accusations. In the case of the young man with the chance of a permanent job in a Munich bakery, the Central Immigration Office of Upper Bavaria outrageously justified his deportation by declaring that his efforts to integrate into German society were a sign he was not prepared to leave the country voluntarily!

Brutal mass deportations are a key element of the offensive undertaken by Germany’s grand coalition against refugees, which is supported by all of the parties in the Bundestag. This offensive is ultimately directed against the entire working class. The “Migration Master Plan” drawn up by Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (CSU) provides for the establishment of camps in Germany and throughout Europe that resemble the Nazis’ own concentration camps. At the same time, mass deportations to the war zones of the Near and Middle East are to be massively expanded.

Anyone who wants to know what the CDU, CSU and SPD have agreed in their refugee deal should take a look at Bavaria. Many of the points included in Seehofer’s master plan have already been put into action.

On June 5, the Bavarian state government decided on a new asylum plan, which is due to come into force on August 1. It provides for accelerated deportations and asylum procedures. It is all about “more tempo,” declared Bavarian Minister President Markus Söder (CSU): “We want faster procedures.” To this end, a new state office for asylum and repatriations is being established to start work in Bavaria on August 1, with a workforce of 1,000.

Seven of the so-called Anchor Centres agreed by the CDU, CSU and SPD in their coalition agreement are also to be set up and running in Bavaria for the start of August. The term “anchor” stands for “arrival, decision and return.” In addition to the existing initial reception facilities at Manching and Bamberg, internment and deportation camps are to be established in Regensburg, Deggendorf and three other sites. The plan also stipulates that those incarcerated in the centres should be denied any sort of monetary allowance.

The detention centres, which are in effect prisons, and most other refugee facilities are aimed at systematically sealing off and isolating migrants from the rest of the world. Barbed wire is common and sites are chosen in remote areas, cut off from public access and guarded by security companies.

The refugees living in the camps are not allowed to work or send their children to school. They are cut off from independent legal aid and access to volunteer aides is made almost impossible. The percentage of those qualifying for asylum status is very low and many migrants spend months or even years in such centres. According to the Bavarian state government, 10 percent of the residents of the facilities in Manching and Ingolstadt had been there for more than 18 months.