

# German government organises mass deportations of refugees to Kabul

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The louder the protests of working people, the more deliberate and mercilessly the government pursues its right-wing policies. The most recent collective deportations to Kabul in war-torn Afghanistan were carried out on “German Unity Day,” of all days.

On the same day, October 3, 40,000 people took to the streets in the Bavarian state capital to protest against increased police powers and the “politics of fear.” A few days earlier, more than 30,000 people had demonstrated in Hamburg. In September alone, mass demonstrations against racism and xenophobia took place in Cologne, Berlin, Frankfurt, Chemnitz and other cities.

Despite this, the grand coalition of the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and Social Democrats (SPD) is accelerating the pace of its deportation operations. The state governments in which the Greens and Left Party hold office are also continuing to carry out deportations unabated. Because they are preparing social attacks on all workers, the establishment politicians resort to crackdowns on refugees to divide and intimidate the population at large.

Seventeen people were flown to Afghanistan in the latest collective deportation. Eight of them came from Bavaria, the other nine from Baden-Württemberg, Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Schleswig-Holstein and Saxony. Sixty-three federal and four Bavarian state police officers are said to have accompanied them.

With this deportation to a war zone, the state and federal interior ministers are trampling on basic democratic rights, such as the right of asylum and the Geneva Convention on Refugees. Afghanistan is anything but a “safe country of origin.” On average, about 35 members of the security forces die there every day in fighting and attacks by radical Islamists, as the

NGO International Crisis Group has reported. In the first half of 2017, almost 1,700 civilians died in violent conflicts, the highest number since 2009. Overall, the number of people killed through violence in Afghanistan in 2018 could reach a new high of well over 20,000.

Since the US and other NATO powers, including Germany, occupied the country 17 years ago, Afghanistan has been in a state of war. Just hours before the aircraft started its engines in Munich on October 3, there was another bloody attack on a public event in the province of Nangarhar. At least 13 people, including children, were killed and more than 30 injured.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the security situation in Afghanistan has recently deteriorated significantly. On August 30, in its latest guidelines, the UNHCR urgently called for a deportation ban to this country. Kabul cannot be a place of safety for those affected, according to UNHCR guidelines. “Members of the civilian population who participate in everyday economic and social life in Kabul are at risk of falling victim to the general violence affecting the city.”

Moreover, the population in Kabul is increasingly suffering from poverty and hunger. This reassessment by the UNHCR has already resulted in Finland suspending deportations until further notice. But not the German government.

On behalf of the minister of the interior, State Secretary Helmut Teichmann said that the directive of the High Commissioner for Refugees represents “a mere recommendation of the UNHCR, based on the evaluation of various sources. The BAMF [Federal Office for Migration and Refugees], however, continues to hold the view that Kabul is fundamentally

eligible as a place of internal safety.”

The brutality and recklessness of the authorities are shown by the cases reported by the Bavarian Refugee Council and other bodies. Accordingly, in the early morning hours of October 2, a young Afghan man was arrested in Nuremberg. He had been living in Germany for eight years, had his own apartment and was in a steady relationship with a woman for seven years. “An apprenticeship as a gardener was terminated because he was constantly being called to the immigration office,” writes the Refugee Council. “A new job offer as a drywall constructor is available but has not been approved by the immigration authority. The potential employer would be happy to hire him because he desperately needs dedicated workers.”

In two other cases, deportation was aborted at the last minute due to protests. These cases only hint at what fate threatens those who are nevertheless deported.

Eighteen-year-old vocational student Ahmed A. was arrested in Passau on September 27 at his college and taken into deportation custody five days before the deportation flight. On October 1, he was to have started his training course. The young man is from Ghazni, a town taken by the Taliban a few weeks ago. Only when teachers, classmates and friends organised a public campaign for him was Ahmed released, shortly before the deportation was to take place.

It was a similar experience for Mujtaba A., a 22-year-old Afghan, also from Passau. He was arrested on September 18 and placed in deportation custody in Bremen. He too was only released due to widespread public protests. Mujtaba had successfully completed a year of vocational college and then completed a six-week internship as a cook in a restaurant. The company had agreed he could undertake his chef’s apprenticeship there. The only thing missing was a work permit from the Central Immigration Office.

The young man, who is not accused of any crime, lives in a committed relationship with a mother of two children. She had done everything in her power and successfully alerted the Bavarian media to save her partner from deportation at the last minute. However, these cases only show how arbitrarily the authorities act and that the officially claimed case-by-case examination is a fable.

The deportation of the 17 Afghans to Kabul on the night of October 3 brings the number of people

expelled to the war zone to 383. There were 228 this year alone. The largest mass deportation to Afghanistan so far, some 69 people, took place at the beginning of July. Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (CSU) had celebrated this with downright sadistic satisfaction: “Precisely on my 69th birthday, 69 people—I didn’t plan it that way—were returned to Afghanistan. This is far above the usual number.” A few days later, it was announced that one of the deportees had taken his own life after his forcible return to Kabul.



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