

Syrian refugees fear deportation from Germany

Lena Sokoll
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Syrian Islamist leader and *de facto* dictator Ahmed al-Sharaa was welcomed with honours in Berlin by the German state leadership at the end of March 2026. Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (Social Democratic Party, SPD) received al-Sharaa at his official residence, Bellevue Palace. Afterwards, al-Sharaa participated in a German-Syrian economic forum at the Foreign Ministry, and finally Chancellor Friedrich Merz (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) met him at the Chancellery in a demonstratively intimate atmosphere.

In the subsequent press conference, Merz stated that in the next three years, “around 80 percent of the Syrians currently staying in Germany should return to their home country.” Even those who were “well integrated” and worked, for example, such as doctors or nursing staff in hospitals, were “needed at home,” according to the Chancellor, and one must therefore “also talk about these people.”

There is deep concern among Syrian refugees who have sought protection in Germany. The German government is treating return as its desired political option, although a dignified life is hardly possible in civil war-torn Syria, where the persecution of minorities under the new Syrian state leadership continues.

If the description “Islamist terrorist” applies to a state leader in the Middle East, then it is to al-Sharaa. Under his former name Mohammad al-Jolani, he was Emir of the al-Nusra Front, which was initially closely linked to the “Islamic State” and later directly to al-Qaeda. The al-Nusra Front carried out numerous bloody attacks in which countless civilians lost their lives. The United Nations classified the organisation as terrorist as early as 2013.

Since al-Sharaa and his militia, meanwhile renamed Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), rose to become the ruling force in Damascus at the end of 2024 with the support of the Western powers, they have continued to exercise violence against religious minorities and political opponents. Thousands of Alawites, Druze and Christians have already fallen victim to Islamist terror under al-Sharaa.

As for living conditions in Syria, it is significant that

during a visit there in the autumn of 2025, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul (CDU) had still expressed doubt that refugees could return given the massive scale of the destruction. He had not previously seen such extensive damage, Wadephul said after a visit to Harasta, a suburb of Damascus heavily devastated in the war: “People can really hardly live a truly dignified life here.”

The Foreign Minister immediately faced sharp criticism from within his own party for this statement. Head of the Chancellery Thorsten Frei (CDU) subsequently announced the invitation of al-Sharaa to Berlin to discuss the return of refugees. In fact, individual deportations to Syria had begun even before the end of the year.

According to refugee charity Pro Asyl, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees has begun examining the substance of Syrian asylum applications and initiating revocation procedures since September 2025. According to the organisation, this particularly affects single, healthy and fit-to-work men traveling alone, whose applications are more frequently rejected, sometimes even with the classification that their asylum claim is “manifestly unfounded.”

Although a rejection does not yet mean immediate deportation, massive pressure arises for those affected: through imposed deadlines, uncertainty about further residency status, the fear of control measures and the general political tone that makes return appear an obvious or even expected outcome.

Pro Asyl also reports that in rejection cases, the authorities often assume return is possible, just as if one could simply find an income and accommodation again in Syria. In fact, the situation in large parts of the country is characterised by shattered infrastructure, inadequate supplies and a lack of housing, as the German Foreign Minister correctly noted in his “spontaneous statement.” A lack of medical provisions and an economic emergency in particular make return existentially dangerous for many people.

According to current reporting, large-scale deportations to Syria have not yet been documented, but the political and

administrative preparations for them have long been underway.

Recently, for example, the Assyrian Cultural Association in Saarlouis drew attention to the fate of a refugee Syrian married couple threatened with deportation. George Darani (32) and Larisa Alsaifi (26) have been living in Germany since 2024, have learnt German and earn their living in a bakery while waiting for their academic qualifications to be recognised. The threat of deportation is causing them panic attacks, as they fear for their lives if they return. “We want to work, learn, move forward in our lives. We are only looking for safety here in Germany,” says Larisa.

The fact that they belong to a Christian minority against which massacres are occurring under the new Syrian government is not considered grounds for protection by the Interior Ministry. “Protection from deportation applied to refugee Syrians who had fled the Assad regime. Since then, no general protection status applies to refugee Syrians,” reports broadcaster *Saarländischer Rundfunk* on the position of the state authorities.

Parallel to this, calls for supposed “voluntary return” are gaining prominence. In political debate, it initially sounds mild, but in practice people can be subject to considerable pressures: Anyone who no longer has a secure residency status, may face their asylum claim being rejected, or fears their situation may become aggravated, cannot freely make a decision to return in the true sense. Human rights groups therefore warn against describing departures as voluntary if they are *de facto* forced by uncertainty, sanctions and a hostile political climate.

For those affected, this is more than a legal distinction. Returning to a country whose infrastructure is destroyed and where security does not exist, or only exists in some regions and partially, means facing poverty, insecurity and dependence. It is not the formal departure status that decides on dignity and protection, but the actual living conditions after the return.

The German government’s demonstrative support for Syrian dictator al-Sharaa, and its simultaneously ever harsher immigration policies, which move return and deportation to the centre, means double insecurity for Syrian refugees.

In Germany, they experience how their protection status is being politically renegotiated, while a prospect of return to Syria is life-threatening. Many try to escape this burden by changing their citizenship: The number of naturalisation applications in Germany in the last two years was higher than ever before since such statistics began. At around 30 percent, Syria is the most frequent country of origin among those being naturalised.

The working class must defend Syrian refugees

Syria is not a safe country. The Assad regime has been replaced by jihadist leader al-Sharaa, and 14 years of war mean the country’s infrastructure has been largely destroyed. There continue to be many reasons to flee Syria. No one must be forced to return to the shattered country.

Deportations and threats of deportation are a crime against refugees and migrants.

The shift to the right in immigration policy is no coincidence: It is the ideological accompaniment to rearmament, the pro-war course and widespread social cutbacks. The ruling class needs scapegoats to distract from the real causes of social misery—rampant profiteering, war, austerity measures.

The defence of Syrian and other refugees is not just a humane principle. The working class is an international class. Almost a million people of Syrian origin work in Germany in all sectors of the economy—in industry, healthcare, construction, gastronomy, at the post office. They are not transient “guests” but part of the working class. To defend them means to defend the unity of the working class against ruling class manoeuvres to divide workers along nationalist lines.

The working class must demand legal security for all Syrians living in Germany and the right to stay for all who have lived, worked and started families here for years, regardless of employment status or passport. Furthermore, it must campaign for equal wages and working conditions for all workers regardless of origin and citizenship, so that refugees are not exploited as a cheap labour reserve and wage levels are lowered for all as a result.



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