

Solidarity Against Colonial Injustice and Attacks on Our Lives

Political working camp and meeting on further development of refugees and migrants communities

BREAK ISOLATION – Refugee Summer Camp 2012

August 23rd to September 2nd 2012, Erfurt/Thuringia, Germany

Dear Friends, Brothers and Sisters, Combatants,

We, THE VOICE Refugee Forum and the CARAVAN for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants, will organise a camp this summer. We would like to invite you to spend ten days with us, looking at the future and discussing how our unity can be strengthened and developed. We want to reinforce the solidarity between each other that we have lived in practical actions, and we want to prepare for struggles in the future. From our years of experience of the German deportation system in all its forms we know this: self-determination and self-empowerment for us, the refugees – those who are directly threatened by the capitalist system – are at the heart of a movement that aims to overcome exploitation and oppression. We know that we cannot get closer to this aim unless we have a sharp, clear focus and a growing base. Ever since the *Conference Against Colonial Injustice 2009* (<http://thevoiceforum.org/node/1386>) took place, we have been working continuously to create local refugee committees and communities in refugee camps and in several towns. As we move further on we want to expand and strengthen our solidarity as well as the relationships between existing and newly-forming local groups.

During the refugee camp we want to reflect the work we have done up to now, analyse our political environment, and gain political knowledge. We want to pass on our experiences from successful struggles in the past to new activists, and we want to shed light on our weaknesses. Among all the struggles that go on every day, it is time to analyse where we stand and what our future path together can be.

At the moment it is obvious that - despite struggles and resistance against deportation, residence obligation and police brutality - the German state massively exacerbates its attacks on refugees and migrants, especially influenced by the global economic system crisis. Racism is strongly used as an instrument to divide and rule, so those who cause famine, poverty, the separation of families, and isolation can continue to hoard riches.

We witness our countries, our spaces of life, and our societies being destroyed by the Western world as if in a new World War. This happens in spite of all social and political uprisings and mass rebellions. Despite all of the power that unfolded during the protests, we have to witness decisions about the power in our countries being made by groups of politicians outside our continents. This is not a new experience, but its blatant openness is a new slap in the face, and another form of humiliation – and it shows our own weakness. The purposeful export of war material, economic sanctions, and political and military interventions are used to prevent any transformation of the exploitative situation and to smother any attempt to reach real independence. The military alliance NATO has put the world into a permanent state of war and is still threatening our families in the countries we were forced to leave.

Not only does the protest against those who cause misery on our continents grow steadily; young people in Central Europe also become aware of the lies in the rulers' deceptive propaganda. Those young people fight against deportation, exploitation and militarisation. In spite of these facts and in spite of all of our fights, Europe's outside borders are shut off in a military fashion that grows worse every day, and the camp system within the EU develops further and further. The countries at the edges of Europe are made to intercept and fight off the refugees on behalf of the central countries. The camps and the military anti-refugee measures are increasingly moved to other countries outside Central Europe. More and more states turn into lackeys in the battle against enforced migration, doing dirty work on the African and Asian continents for the European states. This has devastating consequences that clearly show the colonial and genocidal ideology of the ruling elites. Humanity is able to produce enough food for the whole population of the earth, but every five seconds a child younger than ten dies of hunger. 37,000 people starve to death every day, and a billion people are permanently extremely undernourished. Every 60 seconds a person dies through firearms, and every year 500,000 people die from gunshot wounds. At the same time, German companies are the third-largest arms exporter worldwide. Capitalism has long lost its golden mask. The destruction of the earth continues, not only killing people, but also destroying the basis of life for future generations. That is why our protest as a part of the struggle against this constant destruction is increasingly important and vitally necessary.

More and more people are involved in our justified resistance, but it seems to be waning in comparison to the amount of destruction and number of attacks we have to witness. Political clarity and the analysis and elaboration of the structures of authority and power need time,

collective study, and insight. However, we ourselves are children of colonialism and capitalism. Splintering and competition within our own resistance movements weaken the entire action against the capitalist diktat.

We are influenced by the effects of 'colonial heritage' – the colonial mentality. We are connected through the chain which colonialism created between the countries that were oppressors and those that were oppressed. It is not only our movement that is weakened by infiltration and manipulation through people who pretend to be allies, but covertly follow an agenda of their own, which sometimes only includes securing their own life and status. Such influences weaken the core of the movement: the self-determination and self-empowerment of those who are immediately concerned.

That is why we – The VOICE Refugee Forum and the CARAVAN for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants – invite you to come to the ten-day meeting in the German federal country of Thuringia. Get involved in the development of self-determined and self-organised refugee communities and committees. Be part of the solidarity platform for refugees in the CARAVAN network. Everyone who wants to join the refugees' struggle and to overcome racism and colonial mentality - come to the camp in Thuringia!

The goal of the camp is to strengthen and concentrate the refugees' resistance. That is what all of our discussions and analyses should focus on. We do not aim to present to each other future campaigns and actions or exchange information about one another. We want to strengthen our solidarity through active communication and find out together how our own freedom is connected to the freedom of others. How can I make your struggle mine, and how can we act together?

Among the central points will be the experiences refugee communities have made with the racist policies and practices of the German system of camps and deportation, but also our practices of defence and self-organisation. Concrete experiences of resistance and solidarity break the circle of fear and powerlessness. This includes gaining technical and organisatory knowledge.

During the camp, we want to take time to reflect upon and analyse the current situation in Germany as well as in our countries of origin, working out which reactions to those conditions are demanded from our resistance movement and strengthening our political awareness in the process. The campaign 'War Against Migration – War Against Flight' will be a main point of the camp. All refugees and migrants are invited to prepare their experiences with this issue and present them to each other.

The entire camp will be based on the principle of solidarity, since we have learnt that solidarity among oppressed people is our strongest weapon and our enemy's worst fear. *The CARAVAN Festival Against Colonial Injustice* in Jena, Thuringia in 2010 (<http://karawane-festival.org>) was called a bastion of solidarity, and that was how all those who attended saw it. The 2012 camp wants to make sure that the principle of solidarity is followed permanently in everyday life. The CARAVAN network still exists in its original form, offering space for active participation and the creation of local groups and initiatives that aim to aid the self-organisation and self-empowerment of refugees and migrants.

The camp's agenda will include plans and specifications for the tribunal against the Federal Republic of Germany, which will take place in Berlin in summer 2013. All refugees will be invited as witnesses and aggrieved parties to document systematic violations of human rights. Our aims include encouraging female refugees, who often are those who suffer most in the German camp system. In the future our documentation shall provide indisputable proof against all attempts to deny the crimes against us that have been, and are still being, committed.

The camp will offer us space for our cultural diversity and the ways in which we express ourselves. We invite all of you to show your talents for music, painting, poetry, dance, sports and games. Children-Care will be provided in the camp.

Don't wait for someone to promise you a solution. They will not come. Don't wait until your own problems have grown so big they force you to act – by then it will be too late. Don't think it's not your concern because you are not a refugee anymore or never were a refugee. We are all connected through the chain of colonial injustice.

Stop the war against flight!

Solidarity with the power of refugee resistance in Germany!

Solidarity with the international movement of refugees and migrants against exploitation and oppression!

Get organised against the German and European regime of isolation camps for refugees and deportations!

Unite against colonial injustice!

Break isolation, overcome all barriers that keep you separated - unite and fight!

Information on the camp and organization: refugeecamp2012@riseup.net

Camp coordination network: Karawane Network and Refugee Initiatives in Thuringen, Wuppertal, Hamburg, Berlin, Mohlau, Hannover Augsburg and Würzburg.

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