

KARAWANE

Für die Rechte der
Flüchtlinge und
MigrantInnen



Statement of solidarity with the African refugees in '48 occupied Palestine

The Caravan for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants stand in strong solidarity with the massive self-organized protests of African refugees against the oppressive policies of the Israeli government.

19.01.2014

In the last weeks we were observing with much appreciation as tens of thousands of refugees took to the streets to protest against the worsening of their situation through new draconian state policies, the corrections to the “Anti-Infiltration Laws”, which permit incarceration without trial of any person suspected of “infiltrating” the country. For those aims the government has built a new “open” detention center, located in the middle of the Naqab desert in the south of the country. This center is supposedly an open detention center, meaning that the persons incarcerated are allowed to leave during the day only. When a couple of weeks ago around 200 refugees initiated a protest march from the detention center towards Jerusalem, they were arrested and sent to an incarceration center for African refugees. The danger of being sent to those centers lurk upon each refugee residing in the country, and refugees are constantly being kidnapped in broad daylight by the Israeli immigration authorities in many big cities, and in ever growing numbers since the amendment to the law. This practice is being done according to clear racial profiling, and has little to do with the legal status of the arrested, which is usually only to be verified later. Furthermore, the state of Israel refuses to install a system of processing asylum requests, and insists on labeling the refugees as illegal infiltrators, which leads to the situation today in which close to none of the 60,000 African refugees in the country have had their asylum case examined. We, as a self-organized network of refugees and migrants see the self determination of the protesting refugees as an inspiring and important step against state oppression and the struggle against colonialism and racism. Without letting well-meaning but often paternalistic white NGO’s dictate the tone of their struggle, tens of thousands of refugees have managed to organize themselves into a country-wide general strike and huge manifestations, which have proven once more that the power of subjective self-organization is the key to any struggle against oppression. Through the days of action we have witnessed many brave acts of civil disobedience, including a general strike in several cities, huge marches and manifestations.

The racism which is directed at the African refugees, much like the “Anti-Infiltration Law” which now condemns them as criminals, has its root in the colonial history of the state of Israel. The “Anti-Infiltration Law” was first legislated in 1954, once again under the pretense of state security, to prevent Palestinian refugees from coming back to their land, which was stripped away from them during the Nakba, the 1947-48 displacement of a major part of the Palestinian population. The Nakba, and the following occupation of the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza in 1967, are the cause of the large numbers of Palestinian refugees forced until today, three generations later, to live in exile in the middle east and around the globe, often in overcrowded refugee camps in disastrous humanitarian conditions. Those refugees are still strictly denied return to their country, even though the state of Israel allows immigrants of Jewish descent from all over the world, which in most cases are not refugees and hold a citizenship of another country, to acquire the Israeli citizenship and immigrate.

We see the oppression, from which the protesting refugees are suffering, as directly connected to the racist and colonialist mindset of the zionist project, very similar to the European colonial and racist mentality under which we as refugees and migrants suffer here. Those policies are being implemented by the west in our countries of origin and are the direct reason of our flight. The zionist project, which itself could not have been possible without the support of the European colonial powers and enjoys its impunity, also has its hand in several armed conflicts and the support of oppressive regimes in the African continent through arm sales and the trainings of militaries and paramilitary groups, an involvement which can be traced decades back, as the Israeli government was one of the last allies of the Pretoria Apartheid regime in South Africa. We see the struggles and protests of refugees everywhere as struggles against these racist and colonialist policies which exploit and destroy our countries.

In Solidarity,

The Caravan for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants
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