



WE DEMAND:

**Housing For All Without Discrimination!
Stand Up Against Racist Backlashes!**

Rally in Eisenhüttenstadt on International Women's Day, 8th March, 2023

Through our various platforms, we denounce the harmful effects that forced shared accommodation has on women, people who identify as queer and children.

This denunciation is based on the experiences of those who were subjected to gender-based violence, sexual assaults, and live with the heavy psychological burden of the fear of deportation. In the long run, their isolation and lack of prospects lead to depression and much more. We also fear racist attacks, as these shelters are easy targets for racists. As a refugee women's group, we lead a feminist campaign against racism and against camps for women and children.

During our 8th March 2023 action which took part outside the gates of Eisenhüttenstadt Camp (a reception centre), more than 20 refugee women came out and participated in the rally. They told us about the slow registration process of their applications, which is taking up to three months.

For them, this means that in these 3 months, there are no identification procedures, no pocket money, no access to education for children and no progress in their case. In other words, they are obliged to live in the camp, but their presence is not officially registered by the immigration authorities, and they have no papers at all and thus have to stay in the town of Eisenhüttenstadt. We also condemn the reintroduction of the Residenzpflicht (mandatory residence

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where one is not allowed to leave their Landkreis) and the prohibition of visitors for all camp residents. These two measures were introduced during the Covid lockdown and have not been revoked. After decades of successful struggles for freedom of movement this is an enormous step backwards.

Instead of the authorities finding solutions, the refugees are blamed for all the problems municipalities are facing due to cuts in their budget. It is no secret that remarks and speeches from political authorities fuel racism and right-wing attacks on refugees. It is no secret that the CDU politicians are trying to get votes in the coming election in 2024 in Brandenburg

through racism. This has and will have one direct effect: We are seeing already an increase in the numbers of racist assaults on refugees and refugee shelters.

Really, enough is enough! We need the local authorities, citizens like you who are organised in the local sports associations, the local church communities, we need residents to show publicly their solidarity with refugees in order to stop the rise in racist attacks. We need to find lasting solutions for a strong social infrastructure that can stand up to crisis, instead of playing the blame game against refugees and migrants.

We need and demand participation, justice and safe living conditions!

We demand respect for the rights of women and of people who identify as queer.

We demand fair procedures for all refugees, procedures that respect human dignity!

Welcome To The Space!

The Space is a safe haven located in Berlin-Neukölln and an important place for Women in Exile. Here, refugee women can meet, exchange ideas, share experiences, and fight for their rights together. The activists of Women in Exile meet here every two weeks to plan workshops and demonstrations, carry out small projects, and help each other in general with their issues.

In 2022, our Space was funded by the Momox Foundation. This was an important step for Women in Exile, as they are often faced with financial difficulties due to their work and political engagement. Momox's financial support enabled Women in Exile to continue their activities and maintain the safe space as a place of gathering and political activism. We are grateful for that!

In addition to the regular use of the Space for meetings and internal events, it is also used by the Refugee Law Clinic to offer legal consultations for refugee women on a weekly basis. This is of great importance for women who are often confronted with legal challenges and have limited access to legal resources.



The Space is used to organise workshops, actions and much more

It is important to emphasize that the safe space for Women in Exile is more than just a place for meeting and planning. It is a symbol of the need for self-organization and solidarity, especially for refugee women who are often confronted with racism and sexism. The safe space gives these women a voice and enables them to fight for their rights and share their experiences. It is also meant for resting and making friends so that women can come out of their isolation and relax.

However, the funding for the space for the year 2023 is not yet completely secured. Therefore, we rely on donations and support. We are grateful for any help-

ing hand, whether it be through furniture donations, renovation work, or ideas for designing the space. With stable funding, we can continue to be active together and bring our demands and concerns as refugee women to the public. In this space, we, as Women in Exile, have found a voice and can fight

together for our rights and against discrimination and exclusion. The Space has become an important symbol of solidarity and community for us, and we will continue to fight to keep it as a safe haven for us and other people in the future.

Looking For A Normal, Happy Life Despite Multiple Health Issues

WIE: You have been sharing your story on your health problems with us since two years. We published it on our Newsletter #25. We are aware you are receiving treatments. How are your health issues at the moment?

T: It is a long time now, that I am suffering from mental and physical health issues. Even though I am having regular treatments and medicines, but rather than recovering, my health is going from worse to worst, day by day.

WIE: What are the major health issues you are struggling with right now?

T: I am struggling with diabetes and severe depression. When I arrived in Germany, I was also diagnosed with a few more health problems, for example, high blood pressure which is causing nose bleeding at times. It is worrying and it is making me more depressed.

WIE: What other ailments do you have?

T: I have some problems with my backbones, knees and ankles. I go to the orthopaedic regularly and take medicines, but I can't feel any difference in pain, especially when I walk. Asthma is another challenge for me, I am using my inhaler regularly. The doctor has suggested a few treatments and is experimenting with it.

The most worrying thing is, I have been diagnosed with stones in my gallbladder. Doctors quickly suggested to remove my gallbladder but after a few tests, the surgeon refused to perform surgery. I have little chances of surviving because of all the multiple health issues.

Honestly speaking I am fed up and tired of all these problems. I wish I could live a happy and normal life again.

WIE: Your asylum case has been refused: can you tell me what the authorities say about your case. Do you think they should reconsider your case on humanitarian grounds?

T: My lawyer requested the BAMF to reconsider my case on humanitarian grounds and provided them all my medical reports from all my doctors, but BAMF refused. They said that I can get all my treatments in my own country even though I told them I cannot afford it.

WIE: Despite all the health issues you are going through, you are very active in the group of Women In Exile. How does your association with Women In Exile help you to keep going and sometimes help you in reducing some stress?

T: As I said, I also have some mental health issues. My doctors suggested I should keep myself busy in some healthy activities. When I was in a camp someone introduced me to the Women In Exile group. I was very warmly welcomed in the group. They helped me to find a good lawyer and a good psychiatrist. What I like and appreciate, and to me the best thing about this group is that they raise their voice for refugees' rights. They are like a family to me. They told me about my rights in this country. They give me positivity and strength of WOMEN POWER.



Interview With A Burundi Family In The Heim Of Marzahn



WiE: How is the treatment in the Heim?

We are treated as if we're not human beings. We have tried many times to explain our problems, but they are just being ignored. Even with the language barrier, when you see an elderly woman or deaf woman literally crying from pain and you ignore, what is that? When we knock on the office's door they shut the window panes in front of our eyes, what is that? Where are we supposed to go when we seek help? When the women from Women in Exile & Friends came to address the people working in the office, they pretended to not be ignoring us and they agreed to do better by helping our most problems. But till now no one of the social workers has even talked to us. So why the pretence? These mistreatments re-traumatise us all, especially when we know what we have undergone through before reaching this country.

WiE: How many are you?

We are four adults, one being handicapped and five children from 15 months up to 13 years. We live in two different rooms.

WiE: What are your daily difficulties?

Only a few of us speak Swahili which at least help us whenever a translator is found or the women from WiE visit us and we talk about our problems and demands. Otherwise we really have major problems.

Once, one of us, who is deaf, had to be taken to the hospital at 2 a.m. with the ambulance together with my 12 year old daughter. I had to stay in the room, because my younger child was also sick. No one accompanied the two, and from the hospital they didn't even know how to come back home. They got lost and they were forced to sit at a tram station till morning with minus degree weather so that they could at least guess through the buildings where they were going.

WiE: Are you happy in the Heim?

No, of course not. We have never felt so isolated like this in our lives. The discrimination and hate is way out of control. We cry everyday and we just stay in doors praying for us to be strong and wishing for the old team that no longer works here could come back because they at least were assisting us and not ignoring us.

WiE: What do you wish for?

That our neighbours stop mistreating us, doing weird things to us, banging on our doors and running away. The social workers could say: Not now, I am busy. And not closing the window panes or disappearing inside whenever they see us coming.

WiE: What do you need?

We would like to have someone to help us find out about our passports, our Berliner passes that expired last year, we would be happy to learn quickly about the routes so that we can buy African foods that we are familiar with etc. We need a flat and we need support. We say thank you to Women in Exile & Friends. They have helped us a lot by visiting us regularly and picking us up to take us to the meeting, sometimes accompanying us to the hospital and organising translation. We say thank you to them for their support. And we ask all people of good will to help us find a place to live.



KEEP IN TOUCH

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DONATIONS

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We thank the following foundations and organisations for their continued support of our work:

