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Press Release

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Tour against the European Detention-Camp System on the 24th and 25th of September 2005

On the 24th and 25th of September 2005 the NoLager-Netzwerk (NoCamp-Network) is running a two-day action tour of locations in Lower Saxony and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, with demonstrations and protest actions against the accommodation of refugees in camps. In Bramsche-Hesepe (Lower Saxony), they, together with the Komitee für Grundrechte und Demokratie (Committee for Basic Rights and Democracy) will demand a public inspection of the deportation camp there. In Nostorf / Horst near Boizenburg (Mecklenburg-West Pomerania), the action tour will head for the new collection camp, intended as a national detention camp for people coming in or leaving the country, and a trailer camp in the state capital Schwerin.

The camp in Bramsche-Hesepe / Lower Saxony has been used as a deportation camp for over 500 people since November 2000. Refugees who, based on the "estimation" of the refugee authorities, have no chance of being granted asylum in the courts are taken directly to the arrivals collection camp. There, they are supposed to be coerced by so-called consultation into leaving "voluntarily". This also applies to people whose application for asylum has not even been formally fully processed. If the refugee does not sign up to their so-called voluntary departure, then this can be taken as constituting a refusal to co-operate, and sanctions can be taken: a cut in part or all of their already minimal cash benefits and further restrictions on their freedom of movement. The state government considers this repressive regime under the banner of "choice" to be a successful model, suitable for export to other camps. In reality, however, it means that instead of involuntarily leaving "voluntarily", significantly more people are forced into illegality. For years, refugees in Bramsche Camp have been demanding with protest actions the closure of the camp and a chance at asylum.

Since the 28th of June 2005, in response to a dramatic drop in the number of refugees, the state government of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania converted part of the camp in Nostorf / Horst into a so-called Landesgemeinschafts-unterkunft (LGU, State communal accommodation). The camp, totally isolated in a forest near Boizenburg, infringes upon the states own decree about communal accommodations and was originally the central camp where all refugees in the state were brought for approx. 3 months on arrival. In Addition that kind of rededication infringes upon coalition-arrangements (SPD / TheLeft.PDS). Mecklenburg-West Pomerania are not to have a so called "Ausreisezentrum", in fact a deportation camp. Now refugees are to be detained there for up to 12 months, if deportation is in store for them in short or medium term. From early 2006, all refugees designated for Hamburg are also to be relocated there. This model means that now most refugees will have no chance of being moved to Hamburg after their initial 3-month stay in Horst. Hamburg is to be made refugee-free. Isolated accommodation of refugees behind barbed-wire fences is to be used as a deterrent - in a camp where there is no possibility of contact with society, as it can be offered by a large city like Hamburg.

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A speaker for the NoLager-Netzwerk: "In both the Bramsche-Hesepe and Boizenburg-Horst camps, people are shuffled seamlessly from one camp to the next, to coerce them into leaving as soon as possible after their arrival. Both camps are deportation camps, even if they are formally part of a euphemistically named first arrival establishment. Both camps are new developments in the national German policy of camps and are part of a dynamic of expansion: instead of closing down empty camps, new models are developed and more refugees are excluded from society in camps. In isolated locations, they are robbed of the chance of making contacts which could give them support. This enables the business of deporting people to run more smoothly, scares refugees away or forces them to escape the intolerable circumstances in the camps into a life without rights in illegality. The same applies to the camps which are being built on and before the borders of Europe. A system of refugee camps which is intended to apprehend refugees at and in front of the EU border already exists in the countries at the periphery, and is to be extended out to countries in North Africa.

We stand against the clear expansion of the policy of camps, in this country and throughout Europe. Protest against the plans of government representatives to extend the principle of camp detention and to create camps outside EU territory must begin here at local camps: for all camps and the concentration of special laws which are applied there constitute a rejection of the principle of equality for all human beings, here, at the borders of Europe and on the migrant routes. This is a dangerous political development which we shall not accept. We demand freedom of movement and equal rights for all people."

Actions:

24th of September	12.00, Bramsche-Hesepe Station: Demonstration for a public inspection of the deportation camp. From approx. 17.00: Drive in convoy to Mecklenburg-West Pomerania. The Residenzpflicht, the denial of freedom of movement for asylum seekers, will thereby be collectively resisted.
25th of September	10.00: Demonstrationen in front of the camp at Horst/Boizenburg 13.00 Schwerin-Görries/Containerlager 15.00 Schwerin Main-Station (Town Centre): Demonstration

More information: www.nolager.de.