

Prime Minister
Mette Frederiksen
Statsministeriet
Prins Jørgens Gård 11
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via Email stm@stm.dk

April 23, 2021

Dear Prime Minister Frederiksen,

It is with great regret and incomprehension that we have been following the developments in Danish migration policy and, in particular, your government's efforts to expel Syrian refugees back to Syria. This country cannot be described as safe under any circumstances. That is why the simple slogan "Syria is not safe!" remains so right and important and should be the basis for all political decisions in these matters - also for the EU member state Denmark.

The European Commission has emphasized that the conditions in Syria do not speak in favor of the return of refugees and that Denmark should not force anyone to return. In its resolution in March 2021, the European Parliament also underlined this important fact and called upon all member states to maintain the protection status of Syrian refugees and to even strengthen it if there are any tendencies that indicate a revocation of comprehensive legal protection. Moreover, this week UNHCR reiterated that despite relative security improvements in parts of the territory, Syria is not of a fundamental, stable, and durable character to warrant cessation of refugee status based on Article 1C (5) of the 1951 Convention.

These demands reflect the assessments of many experts, non-governmental organizations, and other foreign ministries, which perceive the situation in Syria at best as superficially pacified. The Syrian regime is trying to simulate normality by organizing elections, among other things. At the same time, it continues to act against critics at home and in other European countries with a decisiveness and determination that is despicable in human rights terms.

We would like to remind you that from our deep understanding of European values we bear responsibility for those who have fled to us from the turmoil of the Syrian war. Especially the children and families should be enabled to experience a form of safety that allows them to build a future. Any form of implicit or explicit pressure and the questioning of the protection status stirs up insecurity and fear about precisely this better future.

In its Charter of Fundamental Rights, Europe places the human being at the center of all action and commits itself to being an area of freedom, security and justice. In Koblenz, Germany, a court is attempting to administer this justice in a unique criminal trial regarding war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria. Doesn't it seem more than cynical here to call Syria a safe country and to create the conditions for deportation to this country?

We thus urge you to reconsider the path you are currently taking and to make nothing less than a 180-degree turnaround in your current asylum and migration policy (i.e., the Danish law namely Udlændingeloven par 7.3).

Migration is, in historical terms, a completely normal phenomenon. Deportations to a country at war must never be normal. Denmark should not take a vanguard role here.

We look forward to your reply and appreciate your immediate attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

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