

## **“We’re not a good you can sell!”**

### **Deportation hearings with delegations from Mali and protest against them in Halle/Saale.**

**Report, 23.11.2016**

In these days, in the week from November 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> in 2016, in the former “Hotel Maritim” hearings take place, in which with the aid of a delegation of three from Mali refugees are identified as Malian citizens, what in turn leads to their deportation.

On November 22<sup>nd</sup> a group of supporters gathered in front of the hotel to protest against this dubious practice and the German deportation politics and to inform the affected refugees about the background of the hearings.

Not only people from Saxony-Anhalt were summoned to the hearings, but also people from Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia. Thus Saxony-Anhalt and now also Halle/Saale are making a mark as a hub in the field of federal German efforts to get refugees out of the country no matter what.

In talks with affected refugees again and again it was obvious, that they didn’t know about the purpose of the hearings. In multiple cases the refugees didn’t even get a summons, but instead were just put on a list of the respective Ausländerbehörde (“*Foreigners Department*”). Multiple refugees were summoned by force, that is, in handcuffs and under police escort.

Also the people were given documents to sign during the hearing, which most of the people did out of fear, although it was not explained what the document is about and they weren’t given a copy. Furthermore one person was summoned to the Malian delegation because of a so called speech analysis – which among experts is considered highly controversial – categorizing them as Malian.

Thus it happens on a regular basis that people are imputed an identity or citizenship during these hearings which is not theirs. From the delegation’s point of view that pays off. Because the delegation gets a lump sum paid per head for every identified alleged citizen. The payment varies depending on the country between 150 and 350 Euro.

In a short talk one of the delegation members got engaged in when leaving the hotel, he claimed they wanted to help the people because many people coming to Germany would pose as Malian and then would deal with drugs here.

Also interesting is the fact, that apparently the members of the delegation are not members of the embassy, but employees of the Malian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It remains questionable on what legal and contractual basis such cooperation is legitimized. Especially, when German offices deport people to Mali with the aid of travel documents without any validation from the responsible Malian Embassy in Berlin. Such procedure shows how flexible the otherwise inflexible concept of nationality and citizenship and the corresponding legitimation documents can be handled by German offices if it conduces to the interest of deportation.

The Hotel Maritim as a place of arrival and deportation

Since October 2015, the “long summer of migration”, the former hotel is used as branch office of the Erstaufnahmeeinrichtung (“*First Reception Facility*”) for refugees in Saxony-Anhalt. Here for the first time people who succeeded to flee to Germany and are at the beginning of their asylum procedure are not accommodated in isolation for weeks or months.

For some months now the former dining and event hall of the hotel is used over and over for so called hearings with Delegations from different, primarily West African, countries. Therefore special booths were set in which the “identifications” can happen to guarantee smooth flow. The inhabitants of the house and also parts of the employees are not informed about the backgrounds of the hearings. Instead the higher police presence and the people summoned like criminals in handcuffs a climate of unsettledness under the inhabitants.

In March 2017 the hotel will be closed as First Reception Facility because the number of newcomers decreased that drastically with the closing of the humanitarian corridor along the Balkan route, that the places in the Central First Reception Facility in Halberstadt will be enough again. Then the refugees will again have to arrive to the remote Anhaltian outback. And it is to be awaited, where the deportation hearings then will take place.