

# Deported Kosovo refugees left with nothing

By Elisabeth Zimmermann  
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On Sunday evening, the ruling parties of Germany—the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Christian Social Union (CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD)—reached an agreement to declare Kosovo and other Balkan states “safe countries of origin,” to which refugees can be quickly deported without regular asylum procedures. A report published by the *Monitor* news magazine shortly before the decision clearly demonstrates the inhumane brutality of such an agreement.

Two of the magazine’s reporters accompanied the Murtezi family, deported from Düsseldorf, Germany to Kosovo’s capital city Pristina, whose airports receive deportation flights from Germany almost daily. They also visited the family at the home to which they had never wanted to return.

The family spent five months in Germany as asylum applicants and had hoped to be permitted to work. Now, with two children in tow, they had to return to a completely ruined, deserted house without running water, toilets, windows or electricity. In order to survive, the family, unable to find work for years, depends on donations from neighbors.

“We’re desperately poor,” reported Mrs. Murtezi. “I don’t know what else to say. If I’d had money and opportunities, I would have built a house and settled here and would never have gone to Germany.”

The family had hoped to be able to begin a new life in Germany, until they were deported. The police came in the middle of the night. “I discovered two days before that we were to be deported,” said Mrs. Murtezi. “I thought I’d just go out and kill myself. But what would happen to my family then? Better for the children to have a poor mother than none at all.” *Monitor* also spoke with the Selimi family, which lived in a shipping container settlement on the outskirts of Pristina. Faik and Mihane Selimi voluntarily returned to Kosovo from Germany after the end of the Kosovo

War because they believed the promises of German politicians that everything would be better. Today they are bitterly disappointed.

Faik Selimi explained: “That I returned here at that time was the biggest mistake of my life and I’ll never forgive myself for it. I thought Kosovo would change. But that never happened.” He had seen no development. He never again found work in his old profession as a ceramist. Instead, he was forced to work as a day laborer and could not live together with his children.

Selimi gave a tour of his container home: “We sleep here. The two older children sleep at a friend’s home because there’s no room for them here. I live with my wife in this shipping container now. There’s no electricity, no water, no bathroom.”

Two years earlier, the Selimi family had just fled to Germany. They wanted to build a new life for themselves and would have taken any job, but their asylum application was rejected. Three weeks ago, they were deported and now find themselves living in the container settlement with no prospects for an improvement in their situation, essentially left with nothing.

The stories told in the report represent thousands more similar fates for which German policies are responsible. And not only because they ruthlessly dump refugees into such squalor. It is also significant, as the introductory remarks of the *Monitor* moderator note, that in the entire refugee debate, “The reasons for fleeing are seldom discussed. And almost never discussed, is how much blame is shared by German and European policies, when millions of people worldwide flee their countries, above all countries in which Germany and NATO have carried out wars.”

Against this background, it almost borders on cynicism that the German government now wants to deport refugees arriving to Germany from Kosovo as

fast as possible, said the moderator.

Kosovo is Europe's poorhouse. More refugees came to Germany from Kosovo in the first half of 2015 than from any other European country, and to no other country are so many now being deported. According to *Monitor*, one out of four inhabitants live on less than €1.20 per day. Seventy percent of those under the age of 30 are unemployed. Corruption and criminality are ubiquitous among the political elite. Of the approximately 500 million euros of development aid sent from Germany in recent years, practically nothing has gone to the population. Most of the money landed in the coffers of corrupt politicians and officials.

The so-called Eulex Mission of the EU is intended to provide for the establishment of an efficient legal system, but the opposite is the case. Eulex itself bears much of the blame and promotes corruption as well as criminal and mafioso structures so that, for political reasons, those most responsible are never prosecuted or brought to account.

According to the *Monitor* report, the West works with politicians "who stand accused of corruption and the most serious crimes and still control the levers of power."

As an example, the report names Hashim Thaci, a former guerilla leader, later prime minister and today the foreign minister of Kosovo. Thaci's involvement in mafia structures has long been an open secret, even though he has never been convicted.

According to *Monitor*, Germany's federal intelligence service identified him ten years ago as "Keyplayer" in a secret analysis which uncovered his role in the "ties between politics, economy and organized crime in Kosovo." Five years ago, a report by the Council of Europe described Kosovo as a country subject to "mafia-like structures of organized crime" and charged then head of state Thaci with leading a criminal cartel involved in murder, prostitution and drugs.

Thaci's international political career began in 1999. German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (the Green Party) and his American counterpart Madeleine Albright (the Democratic Party) considered the then 31-year old guerrilla commander, who two years before had been sentenced in absentia to ten years in prison in Pristina for terrorist attacks, as the official representative of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)

at the international Rambouillet conference on Kosovo.

The conference, basing itself not least on the (partly invented) reports by Thaci on Serbian atrocities, set the course for the Kosovo War, during the course of which Nato bombed Belgrade and other Serbian cities and forced the de facto independence of Kosovo, previously a province of Serbia within Yugoslavia.

During the war, Nato committed serious war crimes. It bombed chemical and petrochemical facilities in Pancevo, a suburb of Belgrade, and destroyed parts of the Serbian power supply, which also led to the disruption of the water supply. Four GPS-guided bombs from an American B2 bomber struck the Chinese embassy in Belgrade and killed four of its personnel, producing a tense crisis between the US and China. Kosovo itself was extensively bombed during strategic B52 bombing runs. Much of the destruction is still visible today.

The Kosovo War represented a turning point in Germany's foreign policy. For the first time since the end of the Second World War, German troops participated in an international military intervention, under a coalition of the SPD and the Greens, who relied on Thaci's horror stories in order to overcome resistance in their own ranks. The misery in Kosovo today is a direct result of these policies, for which all German parties are responsible.

Since then, Thaci has remained in the political establishment and has profited well from it, as have Fischer and Albright, who sell their international relationships to the highest bidder. Their consulting firms—Joschka Fischer & Company and the Albright Stonebridge Group—maintain an "exclusive partnership," as stated on their official website.

The victims of these policies are left with nothing. They are ruthlessly deported by the German government, and sent back to poverty and hopelessness in Kosovo.

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