

APPEAL FROM THE REFUGEE CAMP IN KATZHÜTTE

Die Bewohner der G.U. Katzhütte 20.02.2008

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We are calling for solidarity and support!

WE WANT TO LIVE IN NORMAL HOUSES AND NOT IN BARRACKS!

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We want to live in normal houses and not in barracks!

23+24 februar 2008 > Meeting with the people living in Katzhütte > 10.30 am
The VOICE Refugee Forum Jena +++ Schillergässchen 5 +++ 07745 Jena

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

We, the asylum seekers living in the housing complex for refugees in Katzhütte (Thüringen) want to make public that we are really suffering from the miserable situation in our refugee camp and that we are determined to protest in many ways to close this camp for the following reasons:

1. We are about 35-40 single refugees (young & old) as well as whole families who are forced to live in complete isolation and with no contact to German society. Katzhütte is a little village in the Thüringer Wald (Thüringen forest) located about 1h30 minutes by train from Saalfeld.

2. We and our children are not criminals yet we are treated as such. We are living in a prison as if we were arrested only because we are asylum seekers.

3. Between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. the following morning there is no warm water for having a shower. Moreover, we can not use the common-kitchen after 4 p.m. From the camp-authorities we should get soap and toilet paper, but this doesn't happen.

4. Our bedrooms are in a horrible state and are not suitable for sleeping because they are in unacceptable conditions (old materials like carton and fiber). Also, the rooms emit a putrid smell due to the mildew (fungus) growing on the walls. We are afraid these conditions are a serious detriment to our health.

5. There is no way to assist a German language course in Katzhütte. As a result, most of us can not speak one word of German. This means, for example, that we always need someone to translate for us anytime we receive papers from the Foreigners' Office or when we go to the doctor.

6. The social help we receive is handed out in so called "Gutscheine" or coupons. We do not receive any cash money and we never get the whole amount at once. In addition, we are forced use these so-called Gutscheine or coupons to purchase all of our groceries in one of the most expensive supermarkets of all Germany: Tegut. Because of the high prices we are forced to pay, our coupons are often times not enough to cover our basic needs.

7. To leave Katzhütte we have to ask for a special permission (Urlaubsschein) at the foreigner office in Saalfeld. The ticket for the train to go to Saalfeld we have to pay by ourselves. But for our "Gutscheine" we get no train ticket, which is a big problem especially for the families with children, who often have to go to Saalfeld to see a doctor.

8. We are obliged to walk for almost 300 metres through the cold just to take a shower. Because Katzhütte lies in the mountains and during the winter temperatures often fall below 0° C, this results in many people becoming ill especially children and old people.

9. We are suffering from the treatment we receive from the director of the refugee camp, who continuously shouts at us and even worse: she is always putting us through collective punishment by closing the water in the kitchen, confiscating the refrigerator or the heater and even arbitrarily closing the kitchen with a key.

Please! We are calling to you to stop these inhumane conditions and psychological torture from which we are forced to suffer!

We are asking for solidarity and support!

We want to live in normal houses and not in barracks!

We want to close this miserable Heim!

Katzhütte Group

For more information please contact Mr. Sbaih: 0162 3574667