
GERMANY PLANS TO START DEPORTING UNDERAGE MIGRANTS TO MOROCCO

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Since opening its doors in 2015, no unaccompanied minors have been deported from Germany. That is soon set to change, as Berlin has started building centers in Morocco to house deported minors, according to a report.

The German government started constructing two youth centers in northern Morocco to house local "street children" as well as unaccompanied Moroccan minors who have been deported by Germany, according to a report from the Welt am Sonntag newspaper on Sunday.

The pilot project creates a legal pathway for Germany to start deporting youths without needing to necessarily locate their families first. In recent years, Germany hasn't deported any unaccompanied minors.

On September 12, 2017, a flight left Germany's Düsseldorf airport for Afghanistan, carrying 15 rejected asylum seekers in what is the first group deportation to the country since a deadly car bomb blast near the German embassy in Kabul in late May. The opposition Greens and Left party slammed the resumption of deportations to Afghanistan as "cynical."

What do the shelters do?

According to Germany's Interior Ministry, who shared the information with Welt am Sonntag, the project involves:

Refugee children: Alone in Germany

Family reunification 'would make more sense'

According to a statement from the Interior Ministry, the shelters "will be open to those under 18 returning voluntarily, as well as forced deportees, especially youths convicted of crimes."

Christian Democrat (CDU) politician and former head of the Bundestag's interior commission, Ansgar Heveling told the paper that although the project is an important step, "it would make more sense to achieve a reunification with their families in their home countries."

"The fact that not a single unaccompanied migrant could be sent home in recent years shows that the authorities must step up their efforts to locate the families," Heveling added.

Welt spoke with migrant youth center counselors in Germany who said that they have not seen any attempts by the authorities to locate the youths' families although many of them regularly talk

of the phone with their mothers.

Hoping for a compassionate family reunion policy

Legal requirements for child deportation

Unaccompanied minors whose asylum applications have been denied can only be deported by Germany under strict conditions. Prior to deportation, Germany authorities must ensure one of two options:

A family member or responsible guardian in their home country will take in the child

A "suitable" reception facility is available in their country of origin

However, hundreds of minors have been turned away at the border or had their asylum applications rejected in recent years.

How many minors has Germany deported in the past?

According to data provided by the German government in response to several inquiries from the Greens and the Left party:

Thousands of unaccompanied youths: The German government announced its intention to build the centers in March. Figures at the time showed that 48,000 unaccompanied minor refugees are living in Germany.

Pressure on Merkel over migrants: Since opening up to thousands of migrants and refugees in 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and her government have come under pressure to stem the flow of migration. Nearly 900,000 refugees and migrants entered Germany in 2015. This year, the number of arrivals is expected to be less than 200,000.

Kaynak/Source: