

Question of Afghan criminals causes rift within German government

Taliban advance won't deter German government from trying to deport Afghan criminals.



In a recent interview, Armin Laschet, the CDU and CSU's joint candidate for chancellor, surprised many observers by saying that Afghan criminals should have their asylum status revoked in the event that they commit offenses in Germany, and subsequently should be deported to their country of origin. The opinion comes only days after Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz shared the same opinion in light of the brutal rape and murder of a 13-year-old Austrian girl committed by four Afghans.

In an interview for the German newspaper Bild, Laschet said that the German government is paying close attention to developments in Afghanistan, where Islamist Taliban forces are gaining ever more ground after the withdrawal of NATO troops from the country. "The situation requires a continuous reevaluation and considerable action with regards to repatriations. However, our course is still unambiguous: those committing crimes in Germany would forfeit their right to remain in the country as our guests," stated Laschet. He vowed not to make any exceptions because "criminals should continue to be consistently deported, even to Afghanistan."

Germany is thus maintaining its policy of deportations towards criminally-minded Afghans, even though there is a civil war raging in their home country. This was confirmed in an interview by CSU Minister of Interior Horst Seehofer. In this interview, Seehofer said, "Germany is currently holding talks with Afghanistan so that deportations of criminals can continue. How can you answer for the fact that criminals can no longer be returned to their home country? We have to consider ways of increasing voluntary departures. If an inmate gets part of his sentence waived, he may leave voluntarily."

In view of the various conventions prohibiting the deportation of people, innocent or guilty, into conflict zones, where they could come to harm, the German government had boxed itself into a corner not only with regards to the worsening security situation in Germany itself, in which Afghan migrants have a disproportionately large role when compared to their numbers within the population. The dispute is also causing a rift between the CDU and CSU on the one side, and the radical leftist social democrats, the SPD, on the other.

SPD chairman Norbert Walter-Borjans criticized Seehofer for maintaining the policy of deportations to Afghanistan despite the country becoming a warzone. "This consideration is fully in line with a misanthropic line of populists. Foreign offenders are people, too. They deserve punishment, but no one has the right to send them to their deaths. Should that be a possibility, deportations must be stopped," said Walter-Borjans.

Currently there are over 250,000 people of Afghan origin residing legally in Germany. According to some criminal statistics, Afghans are five times more likely to commit a criminal act than native Germans. However, in some categories, such as sexual assaults, they are 12.5 times more likely to commit an

offense than the rest of society. However, this is only a fraction of the problem that Germany has been forced to endure with regards to migrant crimes, many of which are committed by repeat offenders. Around one-third of migrants who were suspected of committing a crime had previous convictions. As many as 700 of them had 21 or more previous convictions. Between 2016, a year after the migrant invasion began, and 2020, authorities counted as many as 2000 homicides in which at least one migrant was identified. This statistic does not include German citizens with migration backgrounds or dual citizens. The largest proportion of offenders in 2020 reportedly came from Syria (27,561 people), Afghanistan (14,750), and Iraq (9,835). Immigrants from these countries make up the largest proportion of asylum seekers in Germany, at 57.6 percent.

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