

Policing the borderlands of Europe: humanitarian ideals at the crossroads

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Working in humanitarian borderlands

Well. After we...I would say, without bragging, I would say that things have become much better. Because we pointed out, when we started coming to Greece, we pointed out that conditions were terrible for the migrants. It was like watching, it is terrible to say it, but it was like watching a war movie from 1943. Just like that. It came close to concentration camps. And we wrote a lot about it. What has happened now is that they have expanded the camps. They have gotten in, among other, Mediciens sans Frontiers, nurses which are in the area, and the threshold for being sent to a hospital is quite low. So I have to say that if Frontex hadn't been there, this would never have happened. Never. So one can criticize as much as one wishes, but things have become better. I would say that.

(police officer PU5, Frontex team leader)

«The most challenging part for me was what I talked about earlier. Well, it was so bad that my thoughts went to the dark sides of our European history. I began to reflect over – these are very personal thoughts – but I thought about those who were participating under nazism, who were involved, were they thinking the same as I am now? Did they try to find a way to justify it? Did they understand that what they were doing was wrong? Is it wrong? Should we be involved in this? Should we not be involved? I have a very large apparatus guarding my back, which in a way supports me that this is good. But then you see in a way, at least I see, that nothing happens. What's the point? Many such things. This part has been a challenge and we talked a fair amount about it down there, not exactly with the same perspective, but about whether it was right for us to be involved. Are we contributing to something good or are we just helping Greece to do something wrong? /.../

I hope that my children and grand children can look back on what their father and grandfather did as something that was right, that he did something good; that this will not be a shadow in European history that I have contributed to. I really hope so.«(FRN2)

Humanitarian border governance and the politics of compassion

- On both the national and the international levels, the vocabulary of suffering, compassion, assistance, and responsibility to protect forms part of our political life: it serves to qualify the issues involved and to reason about choices made (Fassin, 2011: 2).
- Humanitarian reason governing precarious lives
- The language of compassion, empathy, and assistance rather than injustice and rights

«Our personnel have saved nearly 14000 lives so far in 2016»



The 'impossibility' of counting border deaths

- Not wishing to acknowledge the costs of border control
- The intensely political, rather than practical, nature of counting, particularly when it comes to mortality (Andreas and Greenhill 2010; Weber and Pickering 2011)
- “In practical political terms, if something is not measured it does not exist, if it is not counted it does not count. If there are no “data”, an issue or problem will not be recognized, defined, prioritized, put on the agenda, and debated” (Andreas and Greenhill 2010).
- Knowledge of death intrinsically connected to an acknowledgement of death; a denial of invisibility of dead bodies.
- Dichotomy between Europe’s humanitarian self-perception and the daily management of its borders.
- Janus faced societies (Barker, 2013)

Averting sight from the costs?

We were thinking some time ago that we should start it [collecting information about casualties], but at that moment it was too early. But especially now that the Eurosur is becoming - and one of the main purposes for Eurosur is to prevent the loss of life - so we thought that we should perhaps establish something more systematic. Of course, Eurosur as such should provide opportunity for that, it is important, of course, and also to a certain extent an issue related to land borders. There are areas which are mountainous and with the circumstances we can see people dying or sometimes there are floodings and all that, so it is important. But we don't do it systematically at this stage, but our intention is to start taking action on that.

(FR3, responsible for risk analysis, March 2013)

The new hybridity of crime control and migration control: What is a prison?

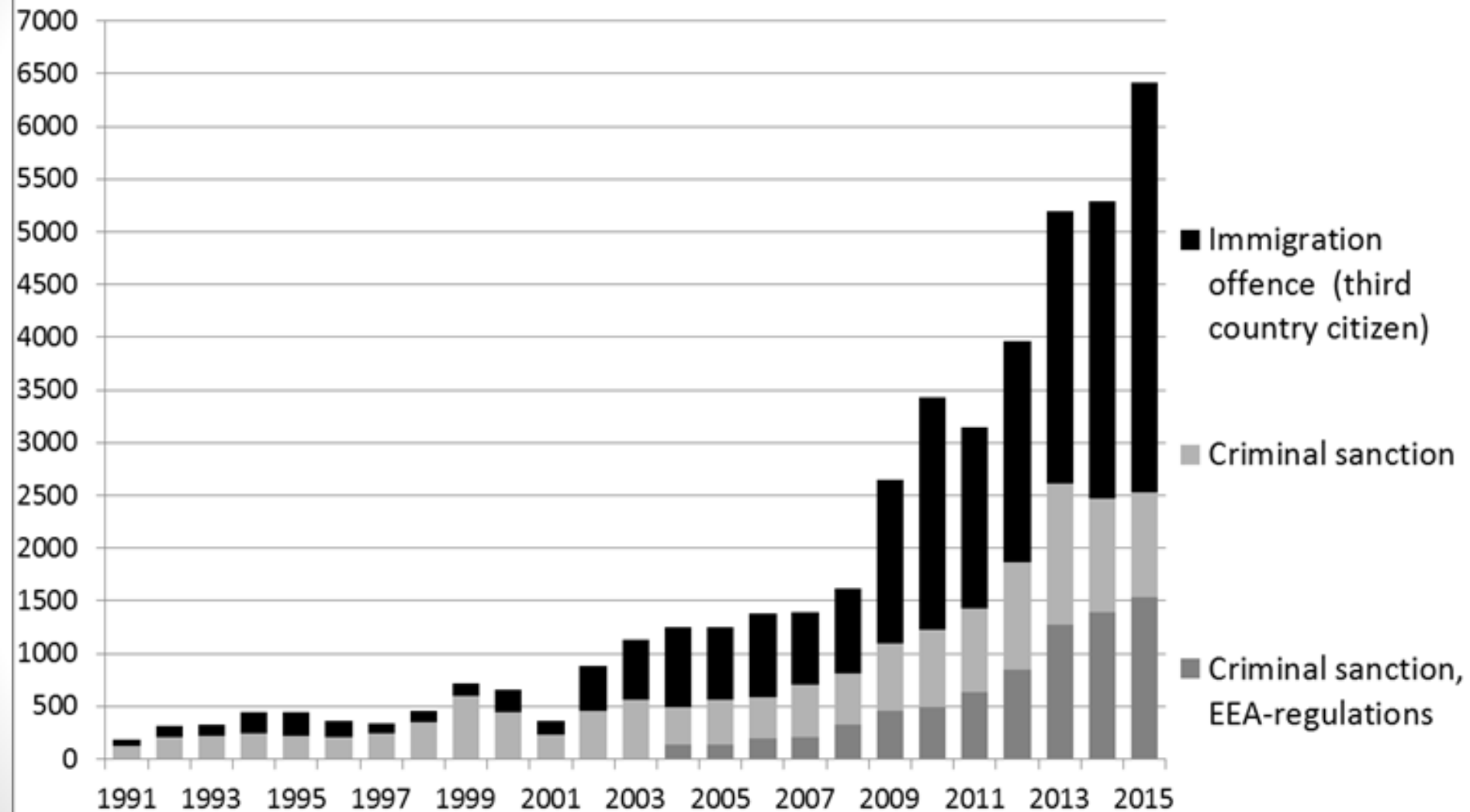


One of the main findings during the visit was excessive attention to control and security at the expense of the individual detainee's integrity. ... Many of the detainees felt that they were treated as criminals, even though they had not been convicted of a crime. Several described the humiliation of undergoing a body search on arrival and after all visits. The body search entailed the removal of all clothing and that the detainee had to squat over a mirror on the floor so that the staff could check whether they had concealed items in their rectum or genital area. The detainees perceived it as especially upsetting that a full body search was conducted after all visits, even when staff members had been present in the room during the visit. Many were also frustrated that they were not given access to their mobile phone and that they were locked in their rooms during evenings, at night and for shorter periods during the day.

The detention centre uses largely the same security procedures as the correctional services, including procedures for locking detainees in and out of their rooms, the use of security cells and solitary confinement, and room searches. In some respects, as in the case of full body searches after visits, the procedures appear to be more intrusive than in many prisons.

(The Parliamentary Ombudsman Report, 2015)

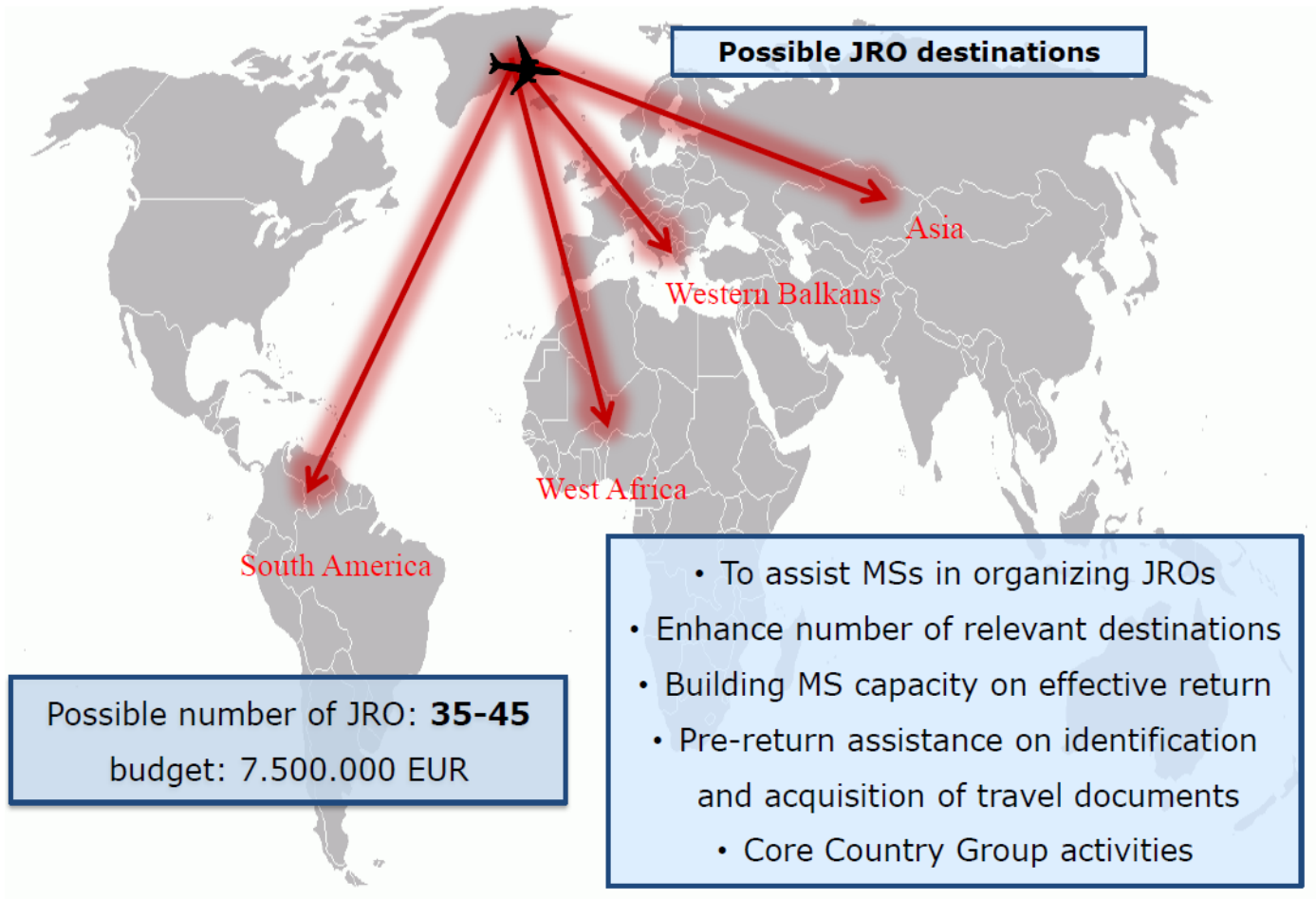
Expulsions (with re-entry ban) from Norway 1991-2015



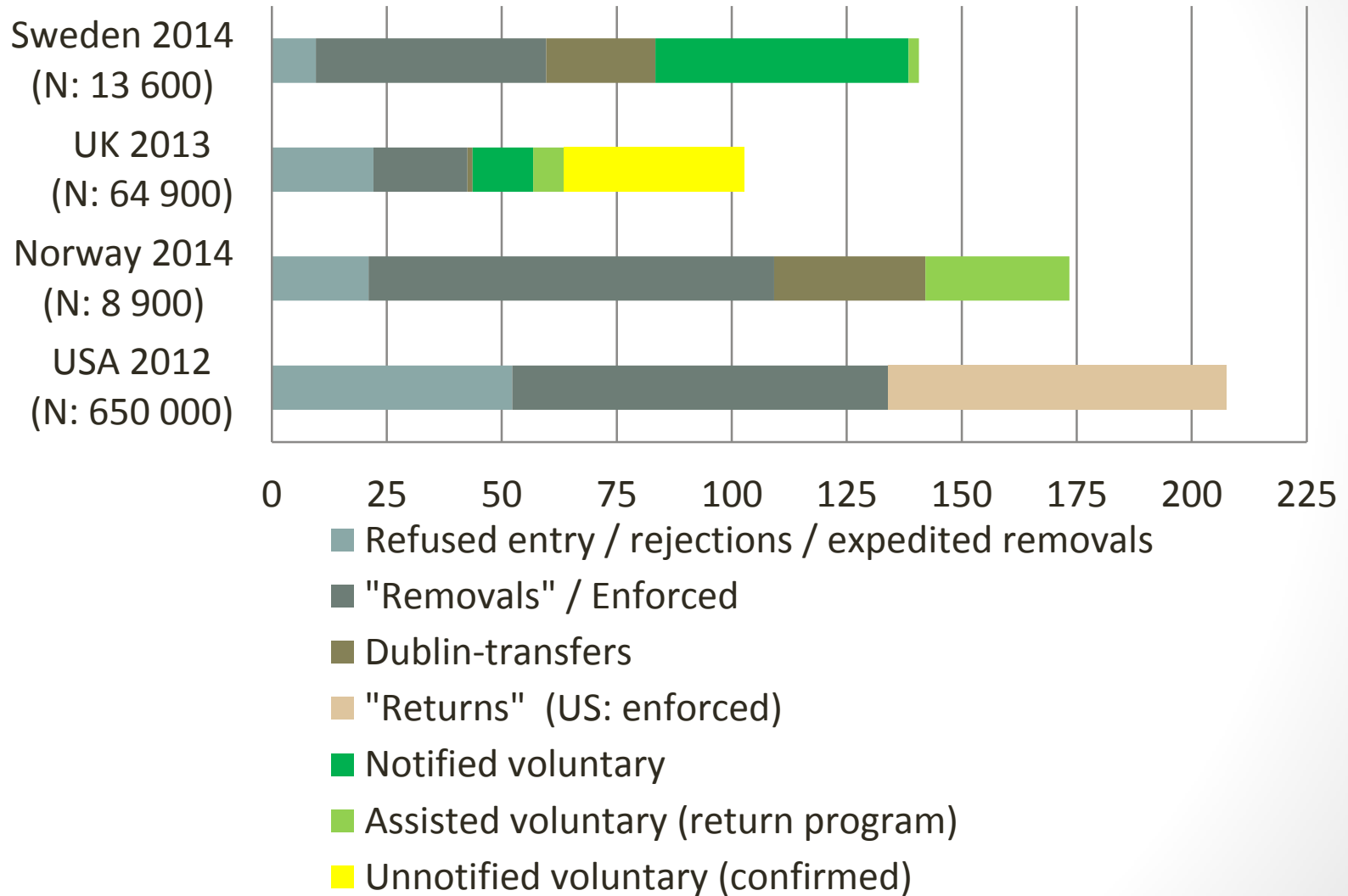
A global regime: exporting the unwanted from the global North

RETURN ACTIVITIES 2012

FRONTEX
LIBERTAS SECURITAS JUSTITIA



Deportations per 100 000 population National statistics



Deportation and forced returns

- Police immigration unit: 135 - 950 employees (2004-2016).
- "A snow ball which is rolling and rolling."
- Increase in forced returns:
7.100 in 2014 (19% increase);
2015 – 7.825.
- Sweden: 5.755 (in 2014)
- UK : 12.460 (in 2014)
 - Returns as a new performance measure ('deportation seminars')



“The police shall remove [by force] at least 9 000 persons without legal residence in Norway. The increase, compared with 2015, shall be particularly related to categories “Asylum” and “Dublin”” (Tildelingsbrev 2016, Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet)

Working in a politically hot area

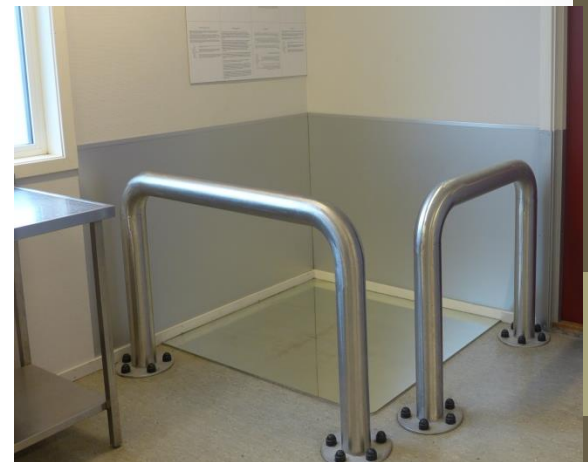
«It may lie in the nature of a right wing government that they have a big focus on this [deportation]. Perhaps a bit bigger focus than others, other parties. And the Progress party was after all one of the drivers behind the increase of resources to the Oslo police district. They have found out that there are many foreigners staying illegally in Norway. /.../ and we wish especially those who commit crime, and who stay illegally in the country, not to be here.»

«it costs quite a bit to have illegals, persons illegally in the country who commit crime.»(OPD)

The dangerous migrant and the logic of (in)security

- “Within the EU policy context, irregular migration remains largely viewed as a security concern that must be stopped. This is fundamentally at odds with the human rights approach” (Paul d'Auchamp, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)
- Criminalisation always one of several available strategies of social governance – a political choice
- National order of things as «the natural» – leads to a vision of border crossing as pathological (Malkki in Koshravi, 2010) and results in the creation of a particular social order with greater reliance on the use of force.
- Crime supports and legitimises a production of coercive and punitive regimes and interventions.
- Asylum seekers' criminality a minor problem (Ellingsen and Mohn, 2014): ca. 2% of registered criminal charges.

«Not a suitable place for children»




The difficult children

«People lived in several floors with poor access to water. Yes, they got food and some medical supervision, eventually. It came after we arrived. And I will never forget ... there was a father ... the cells were dark, there was clothing hanging out to dry in front of the windows and stuff, it was like coming to the Middle Ages. With a two-story grid in the front. And there was a father with his daughter of maybe three years in his arms. She was wearing one of those small pink jogging suits. Inside there was chaos ... crowded with people. And the only thing he says is: "Please, help me". This made an impression on me and ... it is still here, that image. Because he was in a way a symbol of what those people wanted from me while we were down there.»

(FRN2, Frontex Screener)



How can a humanitarian self-perception co-exist with the urge to deport and expell?



Negin Hekmatara


13 år gammel fra Iran

Bosted: Farsund

Negin Hekmatara (13) bodde i Farsund i fire og et halvt år. Hun var medlem i den lokale svømmeklubben, spilte i korps og på gitar. Hele familien konverterte til kristendommen i Norge og var aktive i en pinsemenighet.

[Les mer på nrk.no](#)

Sendt ut 16. januar etter 4,5 år i Norge



Ramtin Hekmatara


9 år gammel fra Iran

Bosted: Farsund

Ramtin Hekmatara (9) bodde med familien i Farsund i fire og et halvt år. Hele familien konverterte til kristendommen, og en pinsemenighet i Farsund har engasjert seg mye i saken. Familien har siden flyktet til et naboland.

[Les mer på nrk.no](#)

Sendt ut 16. januar etter 4,5 år i Norge




Sana Hemat

6 år gammel fra Afghanistan

Bosted: Porsgrunn

Sana Hemat (6) skulle begynne på Vestlia skole i Porsgrunn denne høsten, men ble hentet av politiet før den tid.




Causar Hemat

4 år gammel fra Afghanistan

Bosted: Porsgrunn

Som søsteren Sana, gikk Causar Hemat (4) i barnehagen med sine venner. Bor nå med mor, far og to søstre i Kabul, der de har leid et rom hos en familie. Familien har opplevd flere bombeangrep i nærheten siden de kom til Kabul.

Sendt ut 22. februar etter 4,5 år i Norge




Samar Hemat

1 år gammel fra Afghanistan

Bosted: Porsgrunn

Samar Hemat (1) ble født i Norge. Hun har vært mye syk og Innlagt på sykehus i sitt første leveår.


Sendt ut 22. februar etter 1 år i Norge



Shaimaas vei ut av Norge

Ti år gamle Shaimaa Yusuf hadde bodd sju år i Norge. Bergens Tidende var med da hun og familien ble tvangsreturnert til Jemen i november.


[Les mer](#)



Ikke flere symbolbarn

Asylbarnsaken handler om ekte barn som merker de ekte konsekvensene av en politisk tabbe.

[Les mer](#)



“ Jo sterkere barnets tilknytning (til Norge er), desto mer skal det til for å legge avgjørende vekt på innvandringsregulerende hensyn.

— Ny § 8-5 i forskriften til Utlendingsloven § 38, som regjeringen, Venstre og KrF ble enige om 5. desember og som vil gi flere asylbarn opphold i Norge. Lovdata

However

«If we establish care centres in Afghanistan, more unaccompanied minors will be able to receive a negative decision, so that we can return more. This is the case for those who get a residence permit today, because they do not have access to adequate care in Afghanistan. Precisely those will get adequate care at the centre, if we succeed.»

S. Listhaug (9.5. 2016, Vårt Land)

‘I was on mission last week. It was Force 8 to Force 9. Thunderstorm with hail. We got the call that there was a search and rescue case. We started looking just as the weather got very bad. Out of 12 people who were reported missing, eight of them had been washed dead onto the shore. Among these there was a seven-year-old girl. This girl had been promised heaven in the European Union, but she had been cheated of her life. She paid to be dead. The facilitators, the people traffickers, left her to die. It’s very painful, very distressing. ‘

(Frontex, 2010: 35)



«Crimmigrant others»



Transforming migrants from victims to offenders

Enabling social exclusion in a society with a humanitarian and inclusive self-image

Externalising the blame and justifying the use of force



Outsourcing not only practical responsibility, but also the moral one

Transforming issues of global privilege into issues of morality and the maintenance of the moral order

The (im)morality at the border

- Control of borders an essential prerogative of state sovereignty.
- Borders = use of force
- State legitimacy dependant on legitimacy of its use of force.
- To what extent can the system be legitimate and moral when producing deep moral discomfort on the ground?
- Bosworth (2013): The usual restraints of liberal political power suspended in detention centres - lacking legitimacy.
- The crimmigrant easing the moral discomfort.
- Nordic countries branded as «moral superpowers».
- Asylum policies ruining the brand?

