

SUMMER ACTION:

WELCOMING, SUPPORTING,
AND ACTING TOGETHER

AUGUST 27 – 31

We are organizing a week of action and collective gathering with refugee women living in *Heims* (shelters) of Brandenburg as part of our solidarity project.



Why this action?

Refugee women face multiple forms of exclusion: Sexism & racism, isolation, precarious living conditions, and particularly harsh discrimination when it comes to accessing housing. This week is about creating space for them to breathe, to speak, to connect, and to build strength together.

A Week of Workshops, Community, and Solidarity

Over the course of five days, we will host practical and creative workshops, seminars, and collective moments in our project house – a space we are building with and for refugee women.

The program includes:

- Workshops: sewing, cooking, and sharing skills and knowledge.
- Safe spaces for dialogue: to speak about lived experiences, needs, and dreams.

Our house project in Brandenburg where the Summer Action will take place

- Seminars and discussions: on rights, housing, and collective strategies for autonomy.
- Community time: shared meals, gardening, relaxed evenings together.

A Space for Strength, Healing, and Possibility

Our project house is more than a shelter. It is a living, working, and healing space, created in collaboration with the women we support. It offers:

- temporary, dignified housing,
- the opportunity to garden, reconnect with nature and the land,
- workspace to develop skills or personal projects,
- learning and knowledge exchange through seminars tailored to their realities.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:



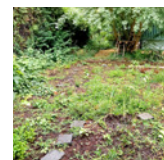
**Open Letter From A
Group Of Refugees In
Eisenhüttenstadt**

Page 6



**Racism At
Every Turn**

Page 7



**Women In Exile's
Herb And Vegetable
Garden**

Page 8

We Need Your Support!

To keep this house running and ensure the success of our summer week, we are calling for financial support.

We are raising funds to:

- purchase and equip the house (furniture, garden tools, workshop materials),
- cover transport and meals for participants,
- pay workshop leaders – especially refugee women themselves.

Every contribution matters.

Every euro helps bring dignity, autonomy, and opportunity to women who are too often pushed to the margins.

To stand in solidarity is to act against discrimination. It is to give visibility, power, and space to those who are silenced.

Scan this QR code to donate or visit
www.women-in-exile.net/en/spenden



Open Letter From A Group Of Refugees In Eisenhüttenstadt

Dear Public,

We are following the news here. A lot is spoken about us. Now we would like to speak to you ourselves.

We fled from war or extreme violence. We have reached Germany to look for safety and become part of this society. Most of us live in the so called “Dublin Polen Zentrum” and shall be deported to Poland. We want to explain to you, why Poland is not safe for us. Poland does not want us.

Poland’s Prime Minister Tusk and others said that they don’t want refugees deported from Germany. For those who have transited for some time in Poland, we had to live in asylum prisons there, which were surrounded with 4 or 5 fences (including electric and barbed fences). There was a time limit, when we could leave the room to get some fresh air (and only with a guard). In these prisons, one of us had a baby there. There were also other pregnant women and also minors without parents in the asylum prison. We did not get any trial to be there. All this led to risk of suicide. Some of us survived suicide attempts and depression.

If we are deported to Poland, the risk for us to go again to these prisons is very high, said the polish border police.

We have experienced more harm in Poland: most of us had to cross the border from Belarus to Poland. In the border forest we experienced extreme violence. Friends have died in the forest from the pushbacks which caused malnourishment and dehydration. We were hit, phones were destroyed, dogs were biting us and due to the pushbacks we could not ask for asylum.



Eisenhüttenstadt

Some of us were already deported to Poland. There polish border police said to them: “Go to Warsaw on your own to claim asylum!”. But how do we cross distances of up to 600 km from the Polish/German border to reach Warsaw without money or a transport ticket? One person among us reports: “One Polish police dropped me off 300 m away from a highway stop. I should ask a truck driver who is heading to Warsaw. The policemen gave me a map and drove away.” Living in the “Dublin Polen Zentrum” we face problems such as: on our ID plastic card is a “D” that stands for ‘Dublin’. Everybody in our camp can know that we are the future Poland deportees. We are treated differently than the others in camp. We feel segregated in the Dublin-Camp. It is shameful for us. We are forced to move into a special area and we have even less privacy: Everyday there is room and sometimes even cupboards checks by social workers or security. The doors cannot be locked and most of our cupboards too cannot be locked, which results in our belongings constantly going missing.

We also face pressure from the camp administration to return to Poland. We get a prohibition to leave the camp from 10 pm to 6 am. So we are like in house arrest. We don’t get any financial support in form of pocket-money. Some of us are living here since 3 months without receiving money. We are not able to finance lawyers,

clothes and other stuff needed. There are women among us with babies that absolutely need support. Migration office does not allow us to leave Eisenhüttenstadt. We are suffering and are in constant fear and anxiety of deportation, because of frequent, unannounced police visits.

We ask the public to support us with this:

- the right to move beyond the city of Eisenhüttenstadt
- a fair asylum procedure in Germany that takes into account the inhuman treatment we faced and face in Poland, especially the threat of being imprisoned in Poland

- Abolish deportation centers in Germany. Poland is not safe.
- normal accommodation with other refugees. Our segregation means fear, control, confrontation with the police on a daily basis and at night.
- remove the “D” on our plastic ID cards.
- Reinstating pocket money which all other asylum seekers receive.
- freedom of movement and no prohibition to leave the camp at nights

We ask the public to stand with us.

We wish for change.



Racism At Every Turn

Patricia and her family from Burundi have been living in social housing facility in Berlin-Lichtenberg for more than three years and still speak of the racism they encounter daily. From neighbors who continuously and secretly throw smelly trash in front of their door, from times of emergency when they have to call the ambulance and the paramedics refuse to go to their floor (4th), and instead ask the family to bring down the patient by themselves.

This family must use the stairs while in deep pain because the staff member refuses to unlock the elevator for them, but allow the other residents, whose skin color isn't black, to access it.

This is not an isolated case. Black refugee women* and their families are disproportionately subjected to racial harassment and institutional neglect in housing facilities across Germany. These experiences are rarely acknowledged by authorities and often dismissed by those in power, including social workers who are meant to protect them.

The family has also struggled with systemic exclusion from learning German. They are always told to wait for a beginner's class but every time they're placed in advanced language courses designed for those already fluent in the basics. This makes the family lose a lot of time, hence creating problems with the Jobcenter, which has started to give them ultimatums with their progress in language courses.

Language is more than a skill; it is access to rights, services, and autonomy. By failing to provide meaningful access to language education, the system sets up refugee families for failure and further marginalization.

Patricia and her family have complained a lot about their health issues, which have often been ignored and their pain dismissed. They struggle a lot with chest tightness and excruciating pain from the sides. But time and time again, German doctors dismiss their suffering. The family says that now it has been like a song in their heads. They tell them: “We can't see or find anything, but make sure to take painkillers and drink a lot of water“.

“How can everything be fine when we feel this way every day?” Patricia's mother tells us.

This medical neglect is not just about misdiagnosis, it is also about racism. Refugee women*, especially Black women, are systematically disbelieved and under-served in the healthcare system. Mental and physical health symptoms resulting from trauma, stress & racism are written off as exaggeration or cultural misunderstanding.

The intersectional injustice that Patricia's family is experiencing is structural. It is not the fault of “bad neighbors” or “overworked staff”, but it is a system built to control, surveil and devalue the lives of refugee women*.

Their story is a call to action. They fled here for safety and deserve dignity, joy and protection.

Women In Exile's Herb And Vegetable Garden

Our small garden in Potsdam has become more than just a place where we plant herbs and vegetables. It has also become a meeting place, for us to enjoy the weather and exchange experiences and stories. It is also a networking and exchange point with the neighbouring Potsdam community Inwolve garden.



This year, four refugee women have volunteered to help with tending the garden and planting different herbs, salads and vegetables. They live in different camps in Brandenburg and come to Potsdam regularly to water the garden.

For some of them, this involves a journey of almost two hours each way. They are very dedicated, which is why we interviewed them to find out: why they volunteered and what motivates them? Their responses are below:

V: I volunteered to work in the garden because I enjoy garden work. In Cameroon I worked in the garden and I enjoyed doing it. For the last three years, I have not done any garden work and I was happy to have the opportunity.

I want to learn from the WiE garden how to go about gardening here in Germany. If I get a house of my own with a small space, I would like to plant different things. In my country we do not water the garden, we wait for the rainy season, then we plant many things, for example ground-nuts, beans, melons, sweet potatoes, cassava etc, sometimes we add manure but plants grow also without it.

A: I do not have much experience in gardening because

in Kenya I did not have the chance to involve myself in garden work, but I like outdoor activities. The trip from Biesenthal to Potsdam is also a way of breaking out from isolation and not staying in the Heim day in and day out. I am now very happy to see how the plants are coming up, from the planting to cultivating and watering. In the next two weeks, we will eat the salads. The herbs, tomatoes and the sweet potatoes are also showing good signs of growth.

C: Last year in summer, I came to one of the WiE workshops here in Potsdam and after there was grilling. We got to know that the sweet potatoes and the fresh salad came from this garden. This is why I felt that I should be part of it, so that I can share with others the products I am part of producing. It also brings me joy volunteering in such a project.

L: The reasons I volunteer for the garden is that I believe in good health, and vegetables that are not heavily treated and processed carry more vitamins and are healthier. Besides, I love gardening, it's something I have been doing at home in South Africa and I would do here again if I had my own garden.



KEEP IN TOUCH

Website: women-in-exile.net
Facebook: "Women in Exile & Friends"
Twitter: https://twitter.com/women_in_exile
Tel: 0331-24348233
Email: info@women-in-exile.net

DONATIONS

Women in Exile e.V.
IBAN: DE21430609671152135400
BIC: GENODEM1GLS (GLS Bank)

We thank the following foundations and organisations for their continued support of our work:

