Statement by Foreign Minister Baerbock on the repatriation of seven children, four women and one adolescent from north-eastern Syria

2022-10-05

About six months have passed since we were last able to bring back German children and mothers from north-eastern Syria to Germany. At that time, we said that only a few special cases were still open. Tonight, another seven children and four women from the Roj camp in north-eastern Syria were brought back to Germany. We were also able to repatriate a young adolescent man who had been taken to Syria when he was 11 years old. I am relieved that, thanks to this operation, almost all known cases have now been closed.

Above all, I am relieved because the children are not to blame for the fatal decisions taken by their parents. The children are also victims of IS at the end of the day. We must therefore not abandon them in the camps in north-eastern Syria. The women and the young man who were brought back will have to answer for their actions and were taken into custody immediately after arriving in Germany.

I would like to thank our contacts on the ground, especially the Kurdish autonomous administration in north-eastern Syria. They have supported us in the past months in preparing and carrying out this operation despite adverse circumstances on the ground. I would also like to thank our US friends for their logistical support.

Background information:

On Wednesday night, seven children, four women and one adolescent were repatriated from north-eastern Syria. A total of 26 women, 76 children and one adolescent have thus been brought back to Germany from north-eastern Syria in the course of six repatriations. The Federal Government’s efforts were targeted at bringing back German children who had to live in the camps there through no fault of their own. Repatriations are only possible with the consent and simultaneous repatriation of their mothers. There is currently only one case in which consent has been given, but the repatriation has yet to be carried out. In other cases, the mothers are not in favour of repatriation at the present time.

Overview "Newsroom"

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