



Permanent Mission
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the Office of the United Nations and
to the other International Organizations
Geneva

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(please quote when answering)

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Note Verbale

The Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Office of the United Nations and to the other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights and has the honour to refer to the Joint Communication from Special Procedures JAL DEU 1/2022 transmitted 1 February 2022.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany welcomes the joint communication sent by the Special Rapporteurs and seizes this opportunity to communicate the following with regard to the questions outlined in the letter:

Germany is concerned about recent activities of ISIS in camps and detention centres in northeast Syria. Daesh and the threat it poses remain a reality for the people in Syria, Iraq and the region and have deeply affected their daily lives. The attack perpetrated by ISIS on the Al-Sina'a detention centre in Al-Hassakeh in January 2022 that claimed several hundred lives, including civilians, is a grave reminder that the terrorist organisation has not yet been defeated. We were appalled by reports that minors were used by ISIS as human shields.

Germany is in close contact with humanitarian stakeholders and NGOs to find ways to improve the current situation, especially the living conditions of the people in northeast Syria, including in camps and detention centres.

Germany remains committed to and engaged within the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS/Daesh. As the second-biggest donor to stabilisation efforts in northeast Syria, Germany is particularly active in the field of deradicalisation and reintegration. Germany is funding several projects at the Al-Hol and Roj camps that combine elements of countering violent extremism, psychosocial support, informal education, vocational training and measures to increase security, safety and sanitation. Moreover, Germany supports NGOs to create safe spaces for minors in detention centres and to advocate for their release or transfer to more child-friendly institutions, and to improve access of detainees and surrounding communities to healthcare.

To the
Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
Palais Wilson
Geneva

Through NGOs specialising in deradicalisation, Germany offers counselling for family members in Germany of IS-affiliated persons in northeast Syria. The objective here is to assist possible deradicalisation processes on the part of these individuals and to support receiving families in preparing for the repatriation of their family members after this has been announced.

Moreover, Germany provides humanitarian assistance via international NGO partners as well as UN agencies and the ICRC at the Al-Hol and Roj camps and in northeast Syria. Access to basic healthcare is supported via a mobile medical unit at the Al-Hol annex and a field hospital at the Al-Hol main camp.

As stated in the January 2021 communication, Germany has no consular representation in Syria. Due to the fact that the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Damascus has been closed since 2012, consular assistance for German nationals in Syria cannot be provided. The German Government is therefore cooperating closely with international NGO partners and the ICRC to ensure individual medical and social care for German citizens – wherever possible.

With regard to repatriations, Germany has carried out four operations, repatriating a total of 42 children, including teenage boys, as well as 12 women from the camps in northeast Syria to date; the latest repatriation took place in October 2021. In this process, Germany has repatriated all unaccompanied minors of German nationality who could be located in northeast Syria so far and all boys under the age of 18 from local youth detention centres. Germany is aiming to achieve further repatriations; children and humanitarian cases remain a focus.

Regarding IS-affiliated adults, the local administration seeks prosecution for crimes committed by members of ISIS. This was recently reiterated especially with regard to male fighters.

When it comes to criminal proceedings, Germany is convinced that those who committed war crimes and crimes against humanity need to be held accountable. In a series of high-profile cases, German courts have convicted a number of Daesh terrorists for international crimes, including genocide. These cases have sent a strong message to all perpetrators, namely that their crimes will not go unpunished.

The Permanent Mission of Germany to the Office of the United Nations and to the other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 29 March 2022