



**Eight Years Are Not Eight Days,
enough of the pain and suffering of Ali.**

Residence right Now!



Contact:

KARAWANE für die Rechte der Flüchtlinge und MigrantInnen Hamburg
c/o Internationales Zentrum B5 , Brigittenstrasse 5 , 20359 Hamburg
Tel: +49-40-43 18 90 37; Fax +49-40-43 18 90 38 mail: free2move[at]nadir.org

Donation account:

Association: Verein zur Förderung der Rechte von Flüchtlingen und MigrantInnen
Bank: Hamburger Sparkasse
Bank code (Blz): 200 505 50
Account number: 126 813 42 59
Keyword: president

It is not about more and not about less than a permanent and secure right of residence for ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ.



ALI SAFIANOU TOUR was born in 1973 in Bafilou in Togo. Under the dictatorship of General Gnassingbe Eyadema and his family clan, Bafilou which is situated in the immediate vicinity of the Kara region, from where the Eyadema clan originate, suffered constant oppression. Consequently many people from Bafilou, especially among the youth, were active opponents of the regime. Mr. Ali recalls that during his early school years he and a friend once criticized that the students often had to practice theatre and dance choreographies for the president, instead of learning. Parents pay school fees for their children to be educated and hope that they later find a job or attend university. Many are extremely poor and have difficulties raising the school fees. The headmaster upon learning of the criticism summoned ALI SAFIANOU and asked him if he was a democrat and warned him to forget such ideas.

Transport workers smuggled the newspaper of the opposition Party for Democracy and Renewal (PDR) from the capital Lomé to Bafilou. ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ joined the youth organization of the PDR and was responsible for distributing the newspapers in Bafilou. Because many people were illiterate he and his school friend Abdou Gafar Tchadre Djibril organized meetings where they read aloud from the newspaper and the issues were then discussed within the group. Due to the increased threats they were forced to leave school. During protests against a rally of the President's party in Bafilou security forces attacked the demonstrators and many were arrested. Around the same time, one of his uncles was killed in an attack by the Army in Sodu.

ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ, who until then had been living with his grandmother and the brother of his father, had attracted the attention of security forces and had to leave Bafilou. He went to Lomé. Because of his disability, the result of contracting polio as a child, it was not easy to find a job. Eventually he began an apprenticeship as a tailor. After a while he became politically active again, sewed banners for the opposition and distributed leaflets. In the run-up to the 2002 presidential election the repression was particularly strong and many were afraid. Informers were everywhere. ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ nevertheless continued to attend University. As a RPT party leader, whom he knew from his schooldays saw him and asked him what someone from the north wanted here in the south, he answered, whether north or south, we want democracy and a new direction. The dictatorship must go. He then continued distributing the leaflets. In the evening he received a warning not to go home and stayed with friends. During a search of his home that night the police found leaflets decrying the impunity of the security forces - the military and police forces are responsible for thousands of deaths. Corpses were sometimes thrown from helicopters into the sea and were then washed ashore onto the Beaches of Lomé. Of particular interest was a video from Germany which his childhood friend Abdou Gafar, who was already in exile, had sent him. The video documents the vigorous protests Togolese opposition against the appearance of dictator Eyadema at the EXPO 2000 in Hanover.

After the police raid, friends took ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ to Ghana from where he then fled to Germany.

At the central reception office for refugees in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, a former GDR army barracks near the town of Boizenburg, he applied for political asylum. He was sent to an isolated camp located in the woods. The "jungle home", as the refugees call it, - the term itself has become a synonym for the many similar camps located in remote areas in Germany - was a collection of huts made of wood and Masonite boards and a single brick building. This building housed the camp administration, i.e. the caretaker and the security staff,

the refugees lived in the barracks. Previous to ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ's arrival there was not even a paved road from this forest clearing to the main road a number of kilometres away. During heavy rainfalls the road was impassable by car. Originally built as a summer camp during the 60's, the complex was now completely dilapidated. Instead of closing it, Thousands of D-Marks was invested to tarmac the forest track.

The condition of the barracks remained the same. Inside, black mould in the rooms and rainwater dripping from constantly from the ceiling. Outside, a frequently overflowing septic tank and many forest animals. In winters with heavy snowfall the camp was completely cut off from the outside. The barracks were virtually un-heat able. There were often power failures due to snow or storm damage. The children received no schooling until the protests of the parents forced the authorities to set up a shuttle service to the school. The refugees could only shop with food vouchers in two supermarkets in Sternberg ten kilometers away.

The Nigerian refugee, human rights activist and member of The VOICE Refugee Forum Akubo Anusonwu Chukwudi lived eleven Years in the "jungle home". Together with other refugees he fought for the closure of the camp and against the discrimination and inhumane treatment of the refugees. The continual protests of the refugees and a growing support for them forced the authorities to close the camp in 2004. ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ and other refugees from the "jungle homes" in Peeschen and Tramm were relocated to a camp on the outskirts of Parchim - newly renovated, fenced in with an entry gate and security guards. That same year the campaign against the dictatorship in Togo was initiated, ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ's application for political asylum was rejected and the first deportation by charter-flight from Hamburg to Togo took place. Based on his experience of the rivalries between the various Togolese opposition groups in the Diaspora, Abdou Gafar Tchadre Djibril initiated an "international campaign against the dictatorship in Togo and other African countries" under the umbrella of the Caravan Network, in which all could participate. In addition to publicizing the crimes of the regime, one of the crucial issues of the campaign was the collaboration of the German Government and its Agencies with the regime. Despite the brutal dictatorship of the Eyadema clan, the German government continued to deport refugees to Togo.

The deportees were often forced to flee the country once again. Some disappeared or were imprisoned and tortured. Togolese deportees reported that the German authorities regularly handed over their asylum files to their Togolese counterparts. The German Foreign Office country reports, which form the basis of the decisions of the administrative courts in political asylum cases, try to gloss over and trivialize the true state of affairs in Togo. Nevertheless, everyone was surprised when ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ's asylum application was rejected. Firstly, he is a close childhood associate of the prominent regime critic Abdou Gafar. Secondly, he was politically active and was involved in all activities and campaigns in Togo as well as in exile. Thirdly, it was obvious to everyone that his severe physical disability left him open to danger. Through numerous demonstrations, events, appeals to human rights groups, a hunger strike at Berlin's Gendarmenmarkt Abdou Gafar Tchadre Djibril (video interview), ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ and others increase public awareness on the true situation in Togo.

In spring 2006 the Mecklenburg State Parliament convened a hearing on the situation in Togo and Togolese refugees. Several invited experts reported on the situation in Togo and on the situation of the refugees. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern issued a moratorium on deportations to Togo. Under the agreements between the State Interior Ministries and the Federal Interior Ministry a moratorium may not last longer than six months. Without re-examining the unchanged situation, the deportations were resumed.

In 2005 Eyadema's son seized power and proceeded to consolidate his regime, a number of opponents were bought-off, impunity continued and all serious criticism suppressed. The stability of his power structure guarantees him the support of France and Germany. The Foreign Office in the meantime attests to the beginnings of a "democratization process". This is grist for the mills of the deportation authorities and provides argumentation template for the many asylum-revocation proceedings.

Despite his serious health situation and his insecure refugee status ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ is still active in the VOICE Forum, the Caravan and the No Lager Network in the struggle for the recognition of basic human rights

of refugees. Many know him by his nickname "president" which other refugees gave him because he is always there for them when he is needed. He is concerned with cultivating contacts, because his ear and his heart are open to all.



His application for residence on humanitarian grounds two years ago still lies with Authorities in Parchim unanswered. The limited medical care afforded 'tolerated' refugees, the camp accommodation, the residence restrictions and the reduced social benefits have led to a worsening of his health situation over the years. In the past he was able to cover longer distances with the help of crutches. Today even short distances cause him severe pain and force him to constantly pause. He fell heavily a number of times on route to or from the many visits to the local authorities or doctors in Parchim District. Meanwhile a circle of friends and acquaintances are endeavouring to ease his daily life as much as possible. The worsening physical limitations and the pain which radiates through his whole, can however only durably be reduced through adequate orthopaedic aids and regular physiotherapeutic treatment. In Togo this is not possible - unless one is very wealthy - and in the present situation for him, it is also not possible in Parchim.

After rejecting his legitimate asylum claims, the authorities are simply ignoring his second application of residence due to his health condition. This means that the immigration authorities are well aware that there are justified grounds and are just waiting for an opportunity to issue a refusal, followed by a quick deportation attempt.

Eight years are not eight days.

ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ can not afford to wait any longer; his health and life are endangered. Together with his lawyer; Sigrid Töpfer and the law office at Budapesterstrasse 49 in Hamburg, we have decided to prosecute to force a decision. We are aware that this can lead to a negative reaction from the immigration office in Parchim under the direction of Heiko Lohrenz given their previous passivity and Lohrenz's record with Activist refugees. Nonetheless, ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ must take this risk; the present situation is no longer bearable.

We call on you to support ALI SAFIANOU TOURÉ's struggle for a secure and permanent residence.

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c/o Internationales Zentrum B5 , Brigittenstrasse 5 , 20359 Hamburg
Tel: +49-40-43 18 90 37 begin_of_the_skype_highlighting +49-40-43 18 90 37 end_of_the_skype_highlighting
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