



Open letter to civil society actors in Denmark

World Refugee Day
20 June 2021

It is about time we act on inhuman refugee politics

We, LGBTI+ refugees together with our friends in the LGBTI+ community, write this letter to urge all civil society actors to take action, big or small, in relation to refugee politics and policies in Denmark.

We have reached a point, where it is not enough to consider oneself anti-racist. Time has come to consider to what extent one is complicit by staying silent. It is time to act up. Also, for civil society actors and politically engaged citizens, who might not usually focus on the rights of immigrants, ethnic minorities, and refugees.

We urge all of you to, please, do whatever you can:

- Reach out to refugees
- Make public statements
- Address the issues with friends and families, and when you collaborate with partners
- Engage with politicians in the party you may be part of or affiliated with
- Help make all kinds of organisations part of the efforts to end the inhuman politics towards refugees.

Allow us to explain the urgency:

The politics threaten us all

We write to you, because we are deeply affected by the current rhetoric, policies and things being done against refugees in Denmark. Most urgently, the cessation of residence permits of Syrian refugees and the intention to return them to Syria. But also, the political wishes to externalize the asylum system to third countries. And, in general, the predominant negative depiction by politicians in power of refugees as a burden, even as dangerous.

Our human rights are threatened and even intentionally violated by a state whose government pushes the limits of the international human rights framework. We urge that this must stop now.

The Syrian refugees, who are not having their residence permits extended, and who are being told to go back to Syria, are our fellow human beings. And our comrades, colleagues, classmates, friends, and lovers.

The consolidation of the discourse that refugees' stay in Denmark is only temporary, and the new policies to enforce that notion, is not only affecting the Syrians currently at risk. It deeply affects and frightens all refugees, as it creates stress and constant unease for all of us. When are they coming for us? When will we be kicked out? Will it ever end?

We are currently witnessing politics where those in power capitalize on the vulnerability of others for political gain. We see policies developed to create fear. Policies that deeply threaten the wellbeing and mental health of vulnerable citizens. Among them, LGBTI+ refugees and asylum seekers in Denmark.

When you are in exile, the feeling of being welcome is essential for wellbeing and integration. But we increasingly get the impression that we are not welcome.

We are all responsible

With the negative rhetoric on immigrants and minorities having gone on for so long, we fear that society at large has become numb. It has become easy to overlook the issue or accept the current state of play. But none of us should become numb, because human lives are at stake. And it is unacceptable that immigrants and refugees are being used as expendables in politics.

Many raise their voices these days, and we greatly appreciate that. But many also do not.

With power and influence – with democracy – comes responsibility. We write to all of you, because as organisations and responsible engaged citizens, you have various platforms and audiences. It has been said that “the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing”. We believe that this is true, and that your efforts, however small, whether they cause waves or ripples, will be an effort still, and that will be enough. The important point is that you will have done your part. Together, let us be a voice of reason, the voice of the voiceless.

Let us all do something

This is not just another political issue, or a strategic game leading up to the next election. It is not something one can choose not to deal with.

This is about life and death. About basic security for people. And about the possibility to live a life in safety without constant fear. We need people to support their fellow human beings. It is now or never, and we, as a society, cannot afford to wait and let history be the judge.

It seems that Danish politics currently takes place in a bubble separated from real people and real lives. Help us break that bubble. Help us to create change for the better.

We all have various means and levels of influence. All we ask is that you do something, big or small.

Sincerely,

LGBTI+ refugees in LGBT Asylum and the following organisations:

LGBT Asylum

Aids-Fondet

Copenhagen Pride

LGBT+ Danmark

Sabaah

TransAktion