

Direct Action

No Borders, No Nations

No-one is illegal

The barbarism of migration regimes cause thousands of deaths along the borders between East and West, North and South. As it gets easier for the flow of money, goods, and capital to roam around the globe, for most people, crossing a border to escape poverty, war,

catastrophe, or political repression becomes more and more difficult. Inspired by the autonomous direct actions and self-organization of the *sans-papiers* refugees in France in the early 1990s, activists in many countries have begun developing new tactics to disrupt these migration regimes.

Flying deportation class

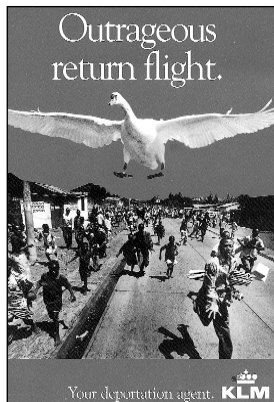
Many airlines are committed to enforcing inhumane asylum policies by flying refugees back to the places from which they fled. Most of the refugees, who are transported against their will, try to resist their deportations. Law enforcement agencies have used extreme

force, including sedatives and handcuffs, against those who are forced to fly 'deportation class'. This has led to several fatalities. Legally out of any national jurisdiction, the captain of a plane has ultimate responsibility for the lives of all passengers, and the guards accompanying the deportee have no more legal status than that of any other passenger. Thus, passengers who intervene in incidents which pose a direct danger to life or physical safety of their fellow passengers, including such deportations, are acting lawfully and do not have to fear being prosecuted on grounds of resisting enforcement officers.

Ways of obstructing the policies of airlines deporting refugees and asylum seekers are many, ranging from participating in email campaigns to object to the deportation, to visiting refugees inside detention centres – all the way up to



Sandy K/ Deportation Alliance / Brian Holmes



using direct action to prevent the deportations. This is one particularly inspiring example:

An man who had befriended a refugee on the other side of the fence at a UK detention centre discovered that his friend was about to be deported without an appeal. The man bought a ticket for the flight the refugee was to be deported on. After the doors were closed, but before the plane was able to take off, he removed his seat belt, folded his arms so no-one would be frightened of his intentions, and declared that the plane was being used to deport an asylum seeker and that he would not sit down until the refugee was taken off the plane. Eventually he was removed by security, but as he left, he yelled that there were 20 others on the plane who were prepared do the same thing unless the refugee was released (more a statement of optimism than fact). The pilot refused to take off until the refugee was removed from the

plane. The refugee's lawyer waiting at the airport used the extra hours to successfully get a new hearing in the refugee's claim for asylum.

No Border camps

No Border camps have been mushrooming across the US, Australia, and Europe. A temporary camp is set up as close to a border as possible. The camps become sites for the exchange of political experiences, as well as cultural and media activities. They create a space, often in remote areas, to gather, discuss, and make connections, as well as to take direct actions to disrupt the border posts or help refugees cross safely. No Border camps have appeared on the shores of the Straits of Gibraltar, the beach of Tijuana, in the desert at Woomera, Australia, and on the borders of Ukraine and Slovakia, Poland and Belarus to name a few.

Even Frankfurt's international airport became a

site for a 1000-strong border camp in July 2001, forcing police to cordon off the entire airport to anyone without tickets for a week. Actions included an illegal classical music concert inside one of the terminals.

Targeting detention centres

Writing to refugees inside detention centres and sending them international phone cards (their lifeline to their families) is one of the easiest actions one can take.

Disrupting the building of new centres is one way to highlight the issues locally. A new detention centre in Italy was demolished by a group, which included priests and members of Parliament, and two more were closed down due to protest.

In Baxter, Australia, actions were accompanied by an independent radio broadcast in the immediate area of the detention centre. It took incoming phone calls from the

refugees inside, and thus established a two-way line of communication with the people imprisoned.

Some have gone as far as to tear down fences and free refugees. This requires, among many things, solid support networks and living spaces for escaped refugees.

Resources:

» **No Border network, fighting for freedom of movement for all:** www.noborder.org
» **Annual US/Mexican borderhack event:** www.borderhack.org
» **UK National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns:** www.ncadc.org.uk
» **Australian support for escaped refugees:** www.spareroomsforrefugees.com