



17 October 2012

To
The Bundespräsidialamt
The President of State
Joachim Gauck
Spreeweg 1
10557 Berlin
Germany

Re: Merciless break-up of the Siala family in LOWER SAXONY, Germany

Respected Mr. President,

Greetings from Global March Against Child Labour!

The undersigned is the chairperson of **Global March Against Child Labour** and board member of Global Campaign for Education. These are among the two largest civil society organisations consisting of Non Profit Organisations, Teacher's Union and Trade Unions active in over 100 countries.

Being the initiator of RUGMARK (Child labour free social label on carpets) and the recipient of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Human Rights Award 1999 & the Aachener International Peace Award 1994, I have a long association with German organisations and various Ministries for almost three decades now. In this background and considering the long-standing support from your government and public on humanitarian and human right issues; as well as in many other campaigns, I am prompted to write this letter based on the information I received through my partners.

We through our partners have been appealing the government and your Predecessors from 2010 to reunite the Salame family. I would like to again share our concern about fifteen year old Amina and her fourteen year old sister Nura, who have not seen their mother (Gazale Salame), sister (Schams) and brother (Gasi) for seven years now.

You are aware of the agony the torn apart family has been facing for years together. However, I would once again like to bring to your notice that in early 2005, pregnant **Gazale Salame** along with her youngest daughter Schams was forcibly deported to Turkey from Germany which was home for them for the past 17 years.

Gazale Salame was deported to Turkey on the pretext of false & baseless allegations that she being a child of civil war refugees had fled along with her parents from Lebanon to Germany via Turkey (*the country of her forefathers*) with the help of Turkish passports and therefore being a Turk did not deserve the right of residence in Germany. The unqualified action of the Aliens' Registration Office in the district of Hildesheim on such pretexts & allegations is violative of the International Human Rights Law.

Further, as a result of such violations **Ahmed Sialas** (*Gazale Salame's husband*), daughters **Amina** and **Nura** are living in Germany while Gazale with her seven year old daughter **Schams** and six year old son **Gasi** are languishing in a poor quarter of Izmir (Turkey). It is abundantly clear that all the four siblings are reeling under the deprivation of a united family and thus are being subjected to the denial of the inalienable rights of the child as guaranteed by the United Nations Child Rights Convention (CRC). Further

the deprivation of Siala family is in defiance to the inalienable rights of all members of the human family that serve to be the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

It was brought to my notice that notably more than 1500 people had signed a protest letter on the internet page of the Refugee Council of Lower Saxony. Also, I am apprised of the fact that recently **Mr. Heiko Kaufmann from the board of Pro Asylum** had mailed his second appeal to you. Such efforts only reinvigorate the need to address the injustice and set precedence of your august office as an enabler to the rights & legal protection.

As a child rights' activist, I have been trying to extend help to the aggrieved family for over three years now, by making earnest appeals to the German Authorities and concerned minister of Lower Saxony to look into the aforesaid case and unite the family in the best of the interest of all the four children. Additionally, my colleague from Global March Against Child Labour (Germany), **Rainer Kruse** has also been actively persuading the relevant Government Departments to uphold the rights of the children by ensuring that the family is reunited at the soonest.

We are of the very strong opinion that:

- The constitutional principle of proportionality and the European Human Rights Convention are being flagrantly violated as the two girl children (**Amina** and **Nura**) have grown up in Germany under the care of their father and have been separated from their mother and two siblings for absolutely no fault of theirs.
- The two children (**Schams** and **Gasi**) who are languishing with their mother in Izmir (Turkey) in poor conditions are being punished for the alleged deeds of their maternal grand-parents/ great grand-parents and have been kept in conditions nothing short of an exile by being separated from their father and elder sisters. These two children at Izmir are also being denied of education, which is their universal right.
- The conditions under which the four children of Ahmed and Gazale are seething under are gross violations of the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** which is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights—civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights in the best interest of children. It is more than evident that the well-being of **Ahmed** and **Gazale's** children seem to be of no concern to the bureaucrats in Germany who are involved in this case.
- The two refugees **Ahmed Siala** and **Gazale Salame** who had been born in Beirut and had fled to Germany with their families when they were small children have nothing to do with Turkey, therefore the ground of Gazale's deportation as upheld by your Minister of the Interior of Lower Saxony Uwe Schünemann and the Aliens' Registration Office in the district of Hildesheim is totally unjustified and cannot supersede the provisions enshrined in International Instruments of the **United Nations** like the **Convention on the Right of Child(CRC)** and the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights(UDHR)**.

Therefore, on behalf of my organization **Global March Against Child Labour** I would request you to look into this matter and take it up with the concerned Government Departments in your Federal State with the sense of urgency so that the family could be reunited in the best interest of the children.

In Solidarity,



Kailash Satyarthi
Chairperson

Copy: Chairperson of Committee on the Right of the Child, Geneva