

## 14.03.2014 | Mali ambassador refuses to address demonstrators on alleged deportation deal (anglaise)

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**Malheureusement cette communiqué de presse sur une action à Berlin à l'ambassade malienne, le 14 Mars 2014, est seulement disponible en anglaise**

Press Statement from FREEDOM MARCH TO BRUSSELS/BERLIN: At 11 AM on 13.03.2014, when our demonstration was scheduled to begin in front of the Embassy of Mali in Berlin located on the first floor of a commercial building in Kurfürstendamm 72, there were merely one or two visible German police officers stationed in front of the entrance and only few more were nearby. This was a notable contrast to the majority of registered demonstrations by refugee protests in Berlin. Even as groups of mostly young and outraged demonstrators started to pour in over the course of the next hour, the police neglected to upgrade the security at the entrance. It should have been little surprise to anyone when approximately a third of the 60 protesters went into the building, in an attempt to ask the highest representative of Mali in Germany to issue a public statement on an alleged deal between the two governments: “development aid” in exchange for “deportation aid”. A controversial article published on March 5, 2014, on the news site Malijet.com

([http://www.malijet.com/actualite-politique-au-mali/flash-info/95195-immigration\\_en\\_allemande.html](http://www.malijet.com/actualite-politique-au-mali/flash-info/95195-immigration_en_allemande.html)) accuses her “Excellency” of being complicit in this state-organized human trafficking. According to the journalist, she pushes her most destitute compatriots into signing a voluntary deportation agreement by offering them a ridiculous sum of 800€ and by threatening that if they refuse the offer, they will have to leave Germany.

Only once demonstrators were already in the entrance hall of the building, the police – finally reacting – blocked the door, which led to an almost explosive atmosphere in front of the building. In the ensuing cacophony, the police were shouting in German to demonstrators who answered mostly in French. The police refused to provide translation. As the anger at the police forces blocking the way to the ambassador grew, three persons – one “non-citizen” and two “citizens” – were arrested. The first one was arrested for “civil disorder” (“Landfriedensbruch”) and two more are charged by the police with trying to free their comrade (versuchte “Gefangenenbefreiung”). All three were transferred to a pre-charge detention centre (“Gefangenessammelstelle”). The two citizens were released in the afternoon, while the non-citizen of color was released only after facing a magistrate (“Hafttrichter”) on late Saturday afternoon.

A criminal charge of trespassing (“Hausfriedensbruch”) was brought against the person who registered the demonstration, a French citizen. This charge was brought by the police and not by the landlord who, according to the police, withdrew his charge. She was also charged for not preventing 20 persons from entering the building and thus violating the terms of the demonstration.

All four proceedings (“Verfahren”) are still ongoing.

After approximately 45 minutes, massive police reinforcement cleared the building of the demonstrators. Now, there were two walls separating the protesters from their goal: a wall of armed police officers and the words of the President of the Young Malian Association in Berlin. Since the early morning, he had proved enduring, yet unsuccessful, in his attempts to discourage his unprivileged compatriots to cancel their protest, which he deemed to have been ignited by false information.

The ambassador refused to appear to make a public statement. Instead, two subordinates

appeared, in a vain attempt to get rid of the noisy protesters. The latter were told they should leave in exchange for the promise of a phone call with her secretary the next morning at 10 am to set up a meeting, in which the ambassador would meet three representatives of the protest.

At 4 PM when the embassy closed, the end of the demonstration was declared after a final call: "We separate now only to unite again soon: on our freedom march from Strasbourg to Brussels in May and June 2014 when we will carry our protest to the European stage."

By 4:30 PM everything had been packed up and the protesters had peacefully dispersed.

Witnesses or people in possession of witness material (footage, photographs, recordings) are kindly asked to get in touch with us : [singenfuerdiefreiheit@hotmail.com](mailto:singenfuerdiefreiheit@hotmail.com)