

UPR Denmark

Briefing note: Torture survivors granted asylum in Denmark

25 February 2021

Background

There is a high prevalence of torture survivors amongst refugees in Denmark.ⁱ They are entitled to receive treatment at five rehabilitation centers, such as DIGNITYⁱⁱ and OASIS. These centers may be located at a good distance from home. Often, the local council does not reimbursement expenses for transportation from home to rehabilitation center. This means that many refugees, who cannot afford paying for transportation, ultimately do not receive treatment and, hence, are denied access to health care.

Since 2018, patients in the Danish health care system, who need interpretation, must pay for the interpreter if they have lived in the country for more than three years.ⁱⁱⁱ This has a negative effect on easy and equal access to health services for torture survivors.

In 2019, Denmark further tightened the criteria for refugees to receive full financial aid for integration.^{iv} Now, these integration benefits are much decreased for people who have not lived in Denmark at least nine of the past ten years and have not had full-time employment for at least two-and-a-half years the past ten

years. Likewise, refugees and others who have not lived in Denmark all their lives only gradually earn the right to child benefits for children below 18 years.

In 2019, the "Paradigm shift" law was passed, which now means that all permits are given "with the aim of temporary stay." Formerly this was "with the aim of permanent stay". Refugees are therefore now only granted temporary stay for one or two years, to be reviewed every second year, and which can be revoked at any time. This uncertain situation creates further stress and badly affects torture survivors.

Recommendations:

1. Amend the law so that refugees who need rehabilitation services are entitled to reimbursement for transportation between home and service provider.
2. Abolish the requirement that some patients must pay a fee for interpretation when accessing health care.
3. Increase substantially social benefits for refugees, granting them the same benefits as Danes and abolish the graduated benefits for children.
4. Secure durable solutions for refugees by ensuring long-term protection for them and their families.

ⁱ Around 30-50% of refugees living in Denmark are traumatized, according to study by the Danish Audit Office Rigsrevisionen (2018).

ⁱⁱ For more information see DIGNITY Rehabilitation Folder (2020) available at dignity.dk

ⁱⁱⁱ Law no. 729 of 8 June 2018.

^{iv} Law no. 174 of 27 February 2019.