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## **Germany: Mgr. Neher (Caritas), “Syria is not a country people can be sent back to; situation there is catastrophic”**

“It is currently unacceptable to send people back to Syria from Germany. The situation in the country is catastrophic, and the dangers for those rejected would be immense upon return”. The president of Caritas Germany, Mgr. Peter Neher, said this in Berlin today as he intervened in the ongoing debate at the Federal Government on whether people at risk, asylum seekers and potentially dangerous persons can be indiscriminately repatriated to Syria over suspected collusion with extremist Islamic groups. Federal Interior Minister Horst Seehofer hopes that, as early as next week’s Conference of Interior Ministers, actions will be taken to loosen the current ban on deportations. In his appeal, Mgr. Neher stressed that the current situation in Syria should be the only criterion of judgement: the situation on the ground and the related risks for those persons served with a deportation order are decisive factors when deciding on a possible return to Syria. “Germany’s political motivations should not call this into question”. Caritas Germany knows “through the direct experience of its humanitarian organization, that not only acts of war, but also attacks and violence against civilians are part of daily life in many regions of the country”. Opposing sides continue to kill those who think differently. Moreover, according to Caritas Syria, “food shortages and poverty are increasing exponentially”: over 9 million families are unable to get sufficient food and experts predict a severe famine this winter.

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