



**European Research Conference**  
**CHANGING PROFILES OF HOMELESSNESS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICES.**  
BARCELONA, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017

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# Homeless undocumented youngsters and caring desperate Swedes

Annette Rosengren, PhD, senior independent researcher and writer

<https://annetterosengren.wordpress.com>  
[rosengren.annette@gmail.com](mailto:rosengren.annette@gmail.com)

# Introduction

Due to harder asylum policy and law we have a new category of homeless people in Sweden - young asylum seekers with negative decision and deportable status or with pending cases.

Most have Afghan nationality and are Hazaras - discriminated and persecuted in Afghanistan as they are Shias. Many have grown up in Iran as discriminated not recognized refugees.

- Many of the youngsters have got their age changed by the Swedish Migration authorities to 18 or more – very criticized methods.
- Feel extremely unsafe. As adults they have lower range of recognition and can be deported and considered to manage.
- Not a question of return for them who have grown up in Iran. No help. Might be killed.
- Afgh is not safe, become worse and worse. Afgh refugee minister, don't deport.

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- Also, as adult they must move to camp for adults in other part of Swe.
  - They stay where they are, where they have school, friends, know Swedes, and become homeless. Rely on protesting and caring friends and Swedes, on trad. organisations for homeless.
  - Are supposed to become many more.

- The text focus the young mostly Afghans who now have become homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless, not other refugees, and not the tragedy with hundreds of North African homeless youngsters, mostly from Morocco, considered economic migrants.
- The text is based on interviews, reports, literature and basic knowledge by the author – listed in References. No notes in this version.

# Background

Sweden –10 million inhabitants – known for giving recognition to many refugees. But has during years denied recognition to far more people – which is less known.

- One of the most efficient and persistent EU states on forced deportation of unrecognized.
- Swedish voices: We have become a cold country for refugees who ask for protection.

- 2015 163 000 asked for asylum. Of 35 000 unacc. minors 23 000 of Afghan nationality, mostly Hazaras, many grown up in Iran.
- In Nov. 2015 Swe “closed the borders” by controls of id and passport, “too many”. No visa, no entry. Other EU-states followed.
- A temporary law was taken in parliament in June 2016. Sweden now on the minimum of EU-level of giving protection.
- Huge, huge protests.



# Unaccompanied minors

- Sweden had good reputation giving unacc.minors without caretakers in Afgh protection by humanity reasons. Still 83% unacc children allowed to stay.
- But many are not accepted as children. Very common to change their age to adult status – 18 or more. Unserious methods.
- Or they become adult while long waiting.
- And also, if 17, even lower – allowed to stay until you are 18.

- So – many stay instead of going to camp for adults in other part of Sweden, to keep school and network but they become homeless.
- Thousands stay and become homeless.
- The negative decisions are becoming more and more now.
- And rejected adults without children lose at once housing and day payment since June 2016.
- 10 000 homeless youngsters in end 2017?

- *You said we should learn Swedish, go to school, build a future – and now we will not be allowed to stay in Sweden. What wrong have I done?*
- **Beginning of August 2017 young Afghans on strike in central Stockholms, day and night. Supports from many Swedes. Much media. Also in other cities.**
- **Demand: Stop all deportations to Afghanistan.**



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# Being homeless

- With pending case 6 euro/day, then you can pay a little if staying with friends.
- With negative answer and deportable: Nothing. No social support.
- Support from friends, activists, schools, churches, mosques, caring Swedes. Temporary solutions. Move around. Parks, under bridges, in cars.
- The school is the stable place.

- New is the state now offer school for 4 years with possibilities to permanent stay if take exam and find steady work within 6 months. Heavy pressure, difficult to concentrate.
- Go to school to keep contacts with grown up Swedes and for food.
- The law gives much hope and much disappointment – not for all.
- Now the state has backed, must not move after 18 if the municipalities allow.

# Social movements on solidarity

- Much on social media, internet and trad media. Swedes upset and protest.
- **#Vi står inte ut, # We can't stand this:** Got quickly ten thousand members, fifty thousand follower.



- Started on Facebook in September 2016 and grew rapidly.
- Official care takers, social workers, teachers and others in schools, employed in housing, parents in family homes, and others.
- Many have opened their homes.
- Much well-educated middleclass but socially mixed. Strong voice, high potency, very active, wide spread, much opinion work and now research work. Connect to lawyers.



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Built knowledge with the grow of rejections and deportations. Radicalised.

*The authorities say they shall "return", but it's not a question of return when they have grown up in Iran and is sent to Kabul.*

*Many arrived with traumas. Now the Swedish state make them traumatised.*

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- **Agape** in Gothenburg, a lokal example. Has a meetingplace for the youngsters. In August 2017 Agape has found family homes for 120 youngsters, and has a list of 300 waiting for the same help.

- **Nobody is illegal.** Supports and advocates deportable and rejected asylum seekers. Young Swedes with alternative lifestyle. Many are students. Gives food, links to legal advice. Opinion work. Can give small money support to make possible to pay a little rent when sharing place with pals. Good contacts to the umbrella organisation The Swedish Network of Refugee Support Groups.
- Lots of supporters, raises money.

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*Activists are young and have no power. Being an asylum activist and citizen activist is not easy, but it's not dangerous, you do not risk that much. But we risk getting legislation in future in which several activities are punishable. I think it will be harder and harder.*

- **Churches and Christian organisations, as City Mission in Stockholm and City Mission in Malmö**, by tradition supporting homeless and marginalised. Have now special programs and places for young deportable and homeless. Offer food, clothes, activities, meeting grown up Swedes, legal support – but not housing.
- Some of the staff are desperate over the situation.

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*I am from Iran, I know how Afghans are treated in Iran and what Iranian authorities do with young Afghans in Iran – they send them to war in Syria or back to Afghanistan.*

*They survive through friends, churches and the City Mission. If they go to school they get food there. The school becomes their permanent world.*

*They must not kill themselves. We have many who have tried. I have to give them hope, they must continue to hope.*

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- **#Hope to Kabul.** Started when desperate Swedes saw their friends – sons – being sent back to Kabul. Raises money and sends it to Kabul for health care.
- Many other ways of showing solidarity – **other organisations, sportclubs, particularly foot ball clubs, coaches, schools, teachers in schools, school mates, and more.**

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- But what will happen if the young will become ten thousands of deportable, traumatised, homeless?
  - Sweden must stop all deportations to Afghanistan.
  - Must give right to housing and daypayment, and right for these young to stay where the schools and the networks are.
  - Amnesty for these youngsters who are here.



# References – all in Swedish

- Interviews 2017 with Liisa Korvenranta och Johan Swanljung, # We can't stand this, Therese Johansson, Nobody is illegal, Klas Hermansson, Skåne City Mission, Malmö, Helen Vihlborg, Stockholm City Mission, Mansour Sattarzadeh and Pernilla Landin, Swedish church in Nacka close to Stockholm, Elin Wernquist, Office of Children's rights, Stockholm, and on strike in Stockholm

In August Mahdi from Agape, Gothenburg, Ali and Mohammed from Uppsala, and Mohammed from Åker.

- Research report from Stockholm county, made by Oxford Research, November 2016. *På flykt och försvunnen: en nationell kartläggning av ensamkommande barn som avviker* (On escape and disappeared: a national mapping of unaccompanied children who run away.) Länsstyrelsen, Stockholm.

- Sager, Maja & Helena Holgersson, Klara Öberg (red.), 2016. Irreguljär migration i Sverige. Rättigheter, vardagserfarenheter, motstånd och statliga kategoriseringar (Irregular migration in Sweden. Rights, everyday experiences, resistans and state categorisations). Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Wagner, Katia, 2017. Pojkarna och de ensamma poliserna (The boys and the lonely Police officers). Stockholm: Natur & Kultur. Page 252-255 has a long information about the criticized methods of

defining age and its consequences.

- Vi står inte ut (We can't stand this), temanummer av (special issue of) Artikel 14 nr 4/2016.
- Mass media articles – mostly in the main Swedish daily newspaper Dagens Nyheter – on issues of refugees arriving to Europe and Sweden 2015, Sweden closing the borders, changes in asylum law, unaccompanied minors, methods of defining age, deportations to Afghanistan and so on.

- [www.farr.se](http://www.farr.se), belonging to The Swedish Network of Refugee Support Groups, FARR, gives excellent information about laws, decisions, discussions, manifestations, study courses and all actualities on asylum and refugees. The context is mostly Sweden, sometimes with hints to the EU and other European countries.

- In the head of the writer: With close contacts to the asylum support movement in Sweden since 2002 I have good knowledge of issues on asylum in Sweden, which also one of my books (2009) is about. Other focus for me as a writer have been everyday life among homeless and drug addicted women in Stockholm (2003) and everyday life of refugees in Athens, Greece, and reflexions of Greek “helpers” (2014, 2017).