

Information about Switzerland

Deportation

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<https://w2eu.info/switzerland.en/articles/switzerland-deportation.en.html>



Switzerland deports people to many countries. You can find an overview of deportations from Switzerland [here](#). Switzerland also has readmission agreements, which facilitate deportations, with many countries. You can find a list of all migration and **readmission agreements** between Switzerland and other countries [here](#).

If you receive a negative asylum decision, your decision includes a removal order. This means that – according to the law – you have to leave Switzerland. If you do not appeal your negative decision, the decision will become binding at the end of the appeal period (5, 7 or 30 days). Whereas it is the national asylum office that decides on whether or not you receive asylum in Switzerland, it is the cantonal authorities that execute deportations. The cantonal migration office organises deportations and the police will carry them out.

In practice, this means that, usually, the following steps happen. However, be aware that depending on which canton you are in, the procedure might vary slightly. This text here should only give you an overview of how deportations take place in Switzerland.

First, you will receive a letter indicating a final date until when you must have left Switzerland. You will also be invited to the cantonal migration office to discuss your return to your country of origin. There you will be asked if you are willing to leave Switzerland voluntarily as well as if you want to meet with return assistance. Return

assistance can support you with small amounts of money for your return (this is very different depending on the canton you are in). You can find a list of all return assistance offices [here](#). At the end of this meeting with the migration office, you will be asked to sign a form that you are willing to return to your country of origin voluntarily. If you do not do this, the migration office can take it as an indication that you are unwilling to leave voluntarily and skip the voluntary return procedure, which means that they can immediately start to attempt to deport you forcefully.

‘Voluntary’ returns procedure

If you have signed the form above, the cantonal authority will first check if the Swiss authority already have a valid travel document of yours. If you have not handed in a valid travel document at the beginning of your asylum procedure, the migration authorities will contact the diplomatic representation of your country of origin in Switzerland (usually this is the embassy). They will ask them to issue what is called a “laissez-passer”. This is a document that allows you to enter your country of origin even without a valid travel document by validating that you are a citizen of said country. Normally, the embassy will demand to see you in person before they issue such a paper. Thus, you would meet a staff member of the embassy in person, who would try to check whether you are actually

the person, you are claiming to be (or the authorities are claiming you are).

In the process of verifying your identity, often a language test is carried out. A specified expert or a delegation from the country you claim to be from or from which the authorities assume you are, will check your language and dialect and assign it to a specific region.

Should a first embassy deny you are a citizen of this country, the authorities will continue to ask further embassies of neighbouring countries. Should no embassy, in the end, confirm your citizenship, you can start the procedure to assert your statelessness. If you are confirmed stateless, you will receive F-status in Switzerland. However, this is a very complicated, very long procedure that takes years at least.

Once a laissez passer is issued, the migration authorities will book a plane ticket for you back to your country of origin.

‘Forced’ deportation procedure

Should the authorities gain the impression that you are unwilling to return voluntarily to your country of origin, they can start a forced deportation procedure. Again, you have to be issued a laissez-passer.

Here, first of all, the authorities have different means to make you to leave the country. They might for example impose a rayon ban/containment order on you, according to which you are not allowed to leave the area of your accommodation. Or they can take you into deportation detention for a maximum of 18 months (see [detention](#)).

Furthermore, there are three different levels of what is called accompanied return flights. The first level includes the police bringing you to a normal passenger plane and makes sure that you sit down in the plane. However, the police will not accompany you on the plane. But, the authorities of your country of origin will be informed of your arrival. On the second level, the police will not only bring you to the plane, but there will be two police officers seated next to you during the whole flight. These officers will then hand you over to the authorities of your country of origin upon arrival. Sometimes they can use restraining measure, on this level. On the highest, the third level, the police will charter a flight to deport a group of people together. Such flights happen mostly from Zurich and Geneva airport. There are no ‘normal’ passengers on such a plane and usually double the amount of police officers than people being deported. On this level, the police can use heavy force and violent restraining measure to get you on to the plane and keep you on it. Sometimes, such flights are organised together with Frontex and there will be people deported from other European countries as well. On such flights, there is always also a medical practitioner as well as an observer of the Swiss anti-torture commission present. However, they have been accused multiple times of not interfering where they should have.

Resisting a deportation

If you do not want to return to your country of origin, even though you have a removal decision, your options are limited. We strongly advice to get legal advice immediately. Resisting a deportation is complicated. The following points are only things that have helped people before:

- Make sure you have legal representation. The free legal aid centres (see the [contacts](#) section)

can help you find a lawyer. Depending on which country you come from, there are differences in the deportation process, that are useful to know. So ask for such specifics as well.

- It is important to resist a deportation together with other people. Ask your friends, family, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues, community members and everyone you know to support you in this difficult process.
- In each bigger city, there are groups of people who can support you. In particular, Solinetz Zurich, Elisa in Geneva and the Solinetz Basel visit people in detention. See also the other groups in the [contacts section](#).
- Some people have used church asylums to gain time to lodge a second asylum claim or to withstand a deadline. Church asylums in Switzerland are rare.
- For further ideas consult our German [deportation section](#).