

Germany and Austria halt asylum applications for Syrians



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Following the toppling of the Assad regime in Syria over the weekend, Germany and Austria have temporarily paused asylum procedures for Syrian nationals.

Austria's Interior Ministry announced an immediate halt to ongoing asylum applications and is preparing a program for repatriation and deportation. "We are working on an orderly repatriation plan," said Interior Minister Gerhard Karner, who also confirmed the suspension of family reunions. Approximately 95,000 Syrians reside in Austria, with nearly 13,000 asylum requests filed this year.

Germany has also frozen asylum procedures for Syrians amid the uncertainty surrounding Syria's political situation. Interior Minister Nancy Faeser stated, "It is too soon to predict safe return options in such a volatile context."

Germany, which welcomed over one million Syrian refugees in 2015, has initiated discussions on potential repatriation. Conservative lawmaker Jens Spahn suggested incentivizing voluntary returns with financial bonuses, proposing €1,000 per individual and government-chartered flights to Syria.

The decisions reflect cautious responses as both nations monitor developments in Syria's evolving situation.