A Syrian national, who was sentenced to seven years in prison and had his asylum status revoked in 2019, was the first person in Austria to be returned to Syria since 2011. The Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum BFA had issued a return decision with an indefinite entry ban in February 2019 but the return was declared inadmissible at this time.

The Syrian national was released from detention in December 2024 and had filed a second application for international protection before his release in November 2024. The BFA rejected the application in April 2025 and issued again a return decision with an indefinite entry ban. The return to Syria was this time declared admissible due to the changed situation in Syria following the fall of the Assad regime. The Country Guidance of the European Asylum Agency (EUAA) provided the basis for the decision. The decision of the BFA became legally binding in the first instance.

In cooperation with the Syrian embassy, the BFA obtained a travel certificate for the forced removal as well as the necessary visas for the police escort. However, a removal initially planned for 11 June 2025 had to be cancelled at short notice due to an interim injunction issued by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). After the interim injunction was lifted by the ECtHR on 17 June 2025, the BFA planned the removal for 23 June 2025. As all flights to Syria and the surrounding region were cancelled on 23 June 2025, the removal had to be postponed to 3 July 2025, when the Syrian national was returned to Damascus on a scheduled flight by specially trained police officers. Further removals to Syria are currently being planned in Austria.

Furthermore, Federal Minister of the Interior Gerhard Karner met his Jordanian counterpart Mazin Abdellah Hilal Al Farrayeh in Vienna on 7 July 2025 and discussed the current situation in Syria and the framework conditions for the return of Syrian refugees.

Source(s)

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