

Association for Homeschooling

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Vereniging vir Tuisonderwys



FROM :

Association for Homeschooling

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TO :

Ambassador Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany

P.O. Box 2023

Pretoria

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Dear ms. Scholl

During apartheid, home education was illegal in South Africa. The parents Andre and Bokkie Meintjies were jailed in 1994, and their children were placed in an orphanage, because they educated their children at home. However, a few years later, the Mandela government legalised home education with the publication of the South African School Act in 1996. Since it was legalised, homeschooling has grown exponentially in South Africa.

In contrast, German homeschooling parents are currently being prosecuted on the basis of a ban on homeschooling introduced by the Nazi government in 1938. In the court case against the Dudek family in Archfeldt, it was testified: "*The 'Schulpflicht' – the laws that require school attendance – are on the books in the German states and have been traced back to the Reichsschulpflicht Gesetz' [federal compulsory attendance laws] which was passed in 1938. Except for the removal of references to the Nazi party, these laws are identical or substantially the same as the laws passed by Hitler's government, criminalizing parents who keep their children home for school.*"

Uwe Romeike, a music teacher, and his family have fled from their home country to the United States. They fear that they will lose custody over their children, be jailed or have their bank accounts confiscated, if they return to Germany. This family has applied for political asylum in the USA.

The German government even goes as far as involving other governments in the persecution of homeschooling families. Four children of the Wunderlich family, that fled Germany to avoid further fines for homeschooling, were snatched from their home in St. Leonard, France, by police and accused of "*being alone*".

The Association for Homeschooling has written many letters to the German Embassy on the persecution of homeschooling families since 2005. However, in spite of these letters, the German government has intensified the campaign of prosecuting parents using Nazi laws. The German embassy has defended these campaigns. The Association would like to urge the German government again to give German parents the freedom to decide for themselves what is in the best interest of their children.

Yours sincerely

Bouwe van der Eems

(Chairman : Association for Homeschooling)