
EUROPEAN RACE BULLETIN

INSTITUTE OF
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EUROPE'S SHAME

**A report on 105 deaths linked to racism or
government migration and asylum policies**

By Liz Fekete

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Introduction

This issue of the Bulletin comprises a report of our research into deaths in the EU in 2007 and 2008 due to either racism or government migration and asylum policies.

Those who died were asylum seekers, migrants, refugees, members of minority ethnic groups or targets of far-Right activity. Though we unearthed 105 deaths, we found that, all too often, such deaths are neglected by Europe's political leaders, as well as its mainstream newspapers. Cases listed here, which took place within EU countries over the last two years, include murders by members of far-Right parties, racist killings, deaths that occurred in immigration removal centres or after contact with the police. Some people died at the hands of extremists, others because of the climate of racism and related intolerance which blights so much of the continent, and still more fell victim, one way or another, to Europe's tough, unbending and inhuman asylum and immigration policies.

We are mindful of omissions. We have not included the thousands of migrants, many from sub-Saharan Africa, who, in attempting to reach Europe, drown in the graveyard of the Mediterranean Sea, freeze to death in the wheel bays of planes or are crushed to death while hanging on the undersides of lorries. But, since the suffering and mortality rates of those who fall victim to Europe's militarised borders are carefully monitored by organisations such as United for Intercultural Action, Migreurop, the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) and Pro Asyl, we decided to focus our energies, instead, on those deaths which occurred inside the 'Fortress', as the EU is invariably described.

Around fifty per cent of the deaths we recorded are related to asylum and immigration policies, and, in particular, the policing of immigration. About one quarter of these fifty-three asylum and immigration-related deaths occurred after contact with immigration police. We also recorded a further thirteen non-immigration related deaths of members of minority-ethnic groups, mostly Roma or those of North African origin, that occurred after contact with police officers. In total one quarter of the total number of cases we have documented in a report whose main focus is racism, occurred after contact, sometimes violent, with members of Europe's police forces, particularly the immigration police. And many of the deaths recorded in our section on racism, fascism and intolerance also have policing implications. For they reflect the failure of Europe's police forces and criminal justice systems to protect black people, the Roma, Muslims and other members of minority ethnic groups from racial violence and far-Right attack. Appendix C on p35 details police-related deaths.

It is extremely difficult to comprehensively record what happens to vulnerable minority communities across a whole continent. We cannot claim our list to be exhaustive. And even this partial rendering of the record could not have been compiled from 'official' sources. The cases gathered here reflect the unstinting efforts of local organisations and non-governmental organisations to bring cases to light. In the absence of political leadership, such grassroots organisations are the only voices seeking justice for all those who fall victim to racism and human rights violations.

But the fact that we have had to rely on such groups, whose number and strength differs from country to country, has doubtless skewed the figures. The fact that more deaths are documented as happening in Germany and the UK than elsewhere is not necessarily indicative that these are harsher places for minorities. Obviously, it is easier for the IRR, which runs its own Independent Race and Refugee News Service, to monitor the situation in the UK. And in Germany the Anti-Racist Initiative and the Amadeus Antonio Foundation in collaboration with the journal *Stern* are providing a vital service by consistently documenting deaths and making that information accessible.

However much we have under-enumerated the problem, we still believe the report as a whole reveals shocking and unpalatable truths about the inhumanity of Europe's immigration and asylum laws and weaknesses in its anti-racist policies. Europe's target-driven deportation policies and failure to acknowledge the destructive nature of racist violence should be causes of the most abject shame.

Liz Fekete, Editor

Asylum- and immigration-related deaths

European governments take pride in adopting tough asylum and immigration policies. But the human misery caused by long periods of detention in immigration removal centres and target-driven deportation policies should be a cause of shame. The terrible impact of callous and unbending laws that dehumanise people and treat them as mere statistics for removal is revealed in this documentation of 53 deaths that are linked, in one way or another, to European asylum and immigration policies. A full list of the deaths is provided in appendix A.

Summary of concerns

Seven of the 53 deaths are linked to Europe's callous target-driven deportation policies. A Nigerian man suffocated during a forced deportation attempt from Spain to Lagos; an Iraqi deportee committed suicide a matter of days after his deportation from the UK; another Iraqi deportee from the UK was blown up in a terrorist attack in Kirkuk shortly after his removal. Two men and one woman died after they were unable to access the medical care they urgently needed on return to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ghana and Angola. The final deportee, a Libyan political dissident, was killed after deportation from Sweden to Libya. There have been allegations that he was tortured by the security services.

The standard of medical care in European detention centres came under repeated criticism in 2007 and 2008 and allegations of medical neglect were made in the cases of five men who died in disputed circumstances in detention centres in Italy, France and the Netherlands. Substandard or inappropriate health care linked to immigration or refugee status was also alleged in the cases of three men who died while under the care of national health services in the UK and Sweden.

Immigration raids, and other police actions, including police 'fishing raids' for illegals and identity checks on the streets, have escalated over the last two years as governments introduced targets for the apprehensions of 'illegals' and the removal of failed asylum seekers, and brought in criminal justice performance indicators which judged police and border guards on their ability to meet these targets. The policing of immigration, which accounts for thirteen of the 53 deaths documented here, is the fastest-growing category in the areas which the IRR monitors.

The largest number of deaths – a total of 25 known cases – were the result of suicide or other action taken by failed asylum seekers and migrants who fell prey to depression owing to long periods of detention, fear of removal or other linked factors.

Deportation: sent home to die

Target-driven government deportation policies give immigration officials and private escort companies the green light to treat failed asylum seekers and undocumented migrants as unwanted commodities. As failed asylum seekers and immigration 'overstayers' come to be viewed by the authorities as mere statistics for removal, a callous culture develops amongst state officials and police agents and the use of excessive force becomes normalised.

The excessive use of force

Those under threat of deportation are not statistics, but human beings, with physical and emotional frailties, and the excessive use of force, not surprisingly, leads to injury, even death. The asphyxiation of the Nigerian national **Osamuyi Aikpitanhi**, on a deportation flight from Madrid to Lagos in June 2007, is the twelfth death during deportation documented by the Institute of Race Relations since the death of Joy Gardner in 1993.¹ Seven of the twelve were Africans and four were Nigerians, which suggests that a higher level of force is applied to Africans than to deportees from other regions of the world.

Deaths in all twelve cases documented since 1993 were linked to the application of adhesive tape or gags, or other methods of restricting the deportees' ability to breathe, leading to suffocation (the official term is positional asphyxia) and/or cardiac arrest. **Osamuyi Aikpitanhi**, who had been gagged with tape, his hands

and feet also tied, died of cardio-respiratory failure resulting from asphyxia. Another case relevant to the discussion of deportation deaths (although categorised in our table as a detention suicide) is that of **Ebenezer Folefack Sontsa** in Belgium. Shortly before his suicide, excessive force had been used in the attempt to deport Sontsa to the Cameroons. Campaigners relate his suicide less than a week later at the Merksplas detention centre to the physical trauma he suffered during this forced removal attempt. (In fact the officers had been so violent that many passengers on the Brussels Airlines flight had objected, and one passenger had been arrested). In recognition of the connection between the use of force in deportations and Sontsa's suicide, two Belgian cabinet ministers and several political parties called for a temporary moratorium on deportations.

Breakdown of deaths	
Deportation-related	7
Medical neglect (in detention centres)	5
Medical neglect (other)	3
Suicides (detention) and related cases	12
Suicides (non-detention) and related cases	13
Police checks or immigration raids	13
TOTAL	53
Gender	
Male	48
Female	5
Deaths by country	
UK	12
Germany	10
France	6
Netherlands	5
Greece	3
Spain	3
Sweden	3
Switzerland	3
Italy	3
Belgium	2
Cyprus	2
Ireland	1

Any use of force by immigration police is potentially deadly. Yet, despite these twelve deaths, no European government has really questioned the morality of state-sanctioned violence to bring about a removal. What happens instead is that governments simply go through the motions of accountability; they announce a review of methods used before finally recommending minor modifications, or alternatives that are potentially just as lethal. The response of the Spanish government to the death of **Osamuyi Aikpitanhi** was no different. In September 2007, it issued a draft protocol of security norms regulating police officers' conduct in the course of repatriations.² It suggested that deportees should wear straitjackets and a helmet (for self-protection) during deportation flights. Deportation helmets have chin-straps preventing the deportee from moving the lower jaw, and were designed in such a way that police officers could attach them to the plane seat, thus restraining the detainees' movements still further. They were banned in Germany following the death of Sudanese asylum seeker Aamir Mohamed Ageeb in May 1999. Council of Europe guidelines recommend the absolute prohibition of adhesive tape, helmets and straitjackets, pointing out that they can cause positional asphyxia.

Not one of the twelve deportation deaths the IRR has documented since 1993 has led to a police officer or immigration official being successfully prosecuted for murder or the lesser charge of manslaughter. Due to the long delays in bringing to trial the two police officers charged in August 2007 with the reckless homicide of **Osamuyi Aikpitanhi**, it is too early to say for sure whether this pattern will continue in his case. But such a long delay in bringing the officers to trial means that over one year after Aikpitanhi's death, his body had still not been flown back to his family in Nigeria for burial.

The background to Aikpitanhi's death is the routine use of force against detainees, and a culture amongst immigration officials and private security escorts where the means (violence) justifies the ends (removal). In the UK, where in 2007 the government resolved to deal with 450,000 unresolved asylum cases within five years or less, Medical Justice (a campaigning organisation of medical professionals, lawyers and former detainees) published a report which, on the basis of the evidence of 18 independent doctors, recorded details of nearly 300 alleged assaults by private escorts against asylum detainees which took place between January 2004 and June 2008.³ Several detainees were rendered unable to walk for extended periods, others received blows to the face, around the cheek and eye. The most common form of injury resulted from inappropriate use of handcuffing, including swelling and cuts to the wrists, sometimes leading to long-lasting nerve damage. Many of those injured were denied wheelchairs, pain relief and other essential treatment whilst in state custody. Doctors also noted the long-term psychological consequences of excessive violence in forced removals (a factor that, as campaigners have noted, probably drove **Ebenezer Folefack Sontsa** to suicide), such as the onset or exacerbation of post-traumatic stress disorder, panic attacks, suicidal feelings and depression. Almost three quarters of the assault allegations documented by Medical Justice in the UK were made on Africans, and there were repeated accounts of abusive language such as 'black bitch' and 'black monkey, go back to your country'. A third of the cases documented involved alleged assaults against women and a significant number were cases where children witnessed their parents being assaulted. Five children alleged that they themselves were assaulted.

Return to war zones

Refugee organisations have highlighted the consequences of returning failed asylum seekers to countries collapsing internally like Zimbabwe, and to war zones such as Iraq. **Hussein Ali**, an Iraqi asylum seeker, committed suicide by shooting himself in the cellar of his home after being removed from the UK and deported via Jordan to Erbil, while another Iraqi, **Mewan Omer**, committed suicide in Sweden rather than be sent back. Since 2007, Denmark, Greece, Poland, Sweden and the UK have been ruthless towards Iraqi asylum seekers, ruling that removals to Iraq are safe. Groups like the European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and the International Crisis Group point out that since the US invasion of Iraq in May 2003, more than four million Iraqi civilians have been uprooted in one of the largest humanitarian crises of our times.⁴ Approximately two million of these refugees live in desperate conditions and legal limbo in Syria and Jordan, the governments of which receive barely any support from the international community. By comparison, just 100,000 Iraqis claimed asylum in the EU between 2003 and 2007. Another case involving a failed Iraqi asylum seeker, documented by the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, was that of **Solyman Rashed**, who had been so ground down by his experiences in the UK – which involved fifteen months' detention and a period of destitution – that he finally accepted 'voluntary' return to Iraq, where he was killed by a car bomb in Kirkuk just two weeks later.

Rendered to the security services

The UN Committee Against Torture recently ruled the Swedish government responsible for the multiple human rights violations suffered by Mohammed Alzery and Ahmed Agiza, two Egyptian asylum seekers seized on the streets of Stockholm following a request from the CIA and summarily expelled to Egypt (even though their asylum applications were still pending), where they were imprisoned and tortured.⁵ But despite the public outcry surrounding their case, Sweden has once again returned a failed asylum seeker back to a country where torture by the security services is commonplace. There was a temporary moratorium on deportations to Libya when Libyan human rights organisations, lawyers and Arabic newspapers reported the death in detention of a 25-year-old deportee from Sweden in 2008. It was accepted that the failed asylum seeker was a member of the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, outlawed by the government, and yet he was

returned to a country known to practice torture. The young man's family are said to have been contacted by the Libyan authorities and told to collect his corpse. The Swedish authorities have attempted to portray his death as a tragic accident and have little to say on reports that the young man was tortured for nine days by the Libyan security services before he was reported dead.⁶

Although we document only one death in this category, several other 'national security' deportees from Europe have disappeared.⁷ In the name of the war on terror, European countries have forged close links with security services abroad known to practice torture. The fact that those deported are accused of terrorist offences cannot allow our governments, who have signed international conventions absolutely forbidding torture, to remove men to countries in the certain knowledge that they will be tortured there. Another case involving the Swedish government involved the deportation of a 29-year-old Moroccan, accused of terrorist offences in his home country. The man had been held in detention in Sweden for two years prior to the deportation, which the European Court of Human Rights had tried to prevent. The Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* reported on 17 August 2008 that the young man has not been heard of since. It is believed that he was immediately arrested by the Moroccan security services, as happened to Cherif Foued Ben Fitouri, who Amnesty International believes was tortured after his expulsion from Italy to Tunisia.⁸

Removal of the seriously ill

Another category of failed asylum seekers who are being sent home to die are the seriously ill, returned to countries where it is patently obvious that they will die, or at the least, suffer serious harm due to lack of appropriate health care and medical treatment. The death of critically ill 63-year-old patient **Amru Aljiti**, who died four weeks after his deportation to Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, falls into this category. Medical experts had warned that he would die from lack of insulin, and he did. **Ama Sumani**, a 39-year-old Ghanaian woman suffering from malignant myeloma and in need of dialysis and other vital drugs, was removed from a Welsh hospital in a wheelchair by five immigration officials in January 2008. Medical experts had warned of the dire consequences of the removal of a cancer sufferer, and Sumani died in Ghana three months later. We do not have many details about the death of **Sherry Alex**, who died of malaria following her deportation to Angola. But could her death have been prevented, if the German authorities had given her adequate anti-malarial treatment prior to her removal to a known malaria zone? Medical Justice has drawn attention to the fact that in the UK many former immigration detainees, including children, contract malaria in their home country on removal from the UK. Couldn't the UK government at least provide those they remove with adequate anti-malarial treatment, they ask, pointing out that people lose their immunity after about three months' absence from a home country where malaria is endemic.

Such inhumanity and irresponsibility is deeply worrying. A number of other documented cases suggest that callousness towards the seriously ill is now spreading like a virus around Europe's immigration ministries. The ruthless manner in which such removals are carried out quite literally takes your breath away. No country is immune from the virus of indifference. Immigration escorts in Sweden, a country with a reputation for its humanitarian liberal tradition, saw fit to remove a paralysed Kurdish man to Baghdad, and leave him stranded at the airport without even a wheelchair.⁹ In 2007 and 2008, the Swedish authorities also removed:

- a mentally ill elderly woman with kidney problems and severe diabetes to Bangladesh where she had no relatives or friends to care for her;
- a man awaiting a liver transplant, who was seized when he reported to the Migration Board and deported to Angola, where he would not be able to access regular medical examinations and controlled medication;
- a dialysis patient with hepatitis B to Syria, where many hospitals refuse to treat hepatitis patients.¹⁰

Norway, another country that boasts a humanitarian tradition, has also begun targeting the seriously ill for deportation. In March 2008, an Afghani man suffering from tuberculosis was removed to Kabul, and a 60-year-old rejected asylum seeker from Turkey suffering from Alzheimers and renal failure was served with a deportation order. She collapsed when deportation police arrived to arrest her. The Akershus University Hospital has warned that her medical condition was such that she could neither stand the transport to Turkey or manage on her own, with no relatives to take care of her, if returned.¹¹

Nor has the ruthless treatment of AIDS and HIV sufferers who are being returned to countries where they may not get the drugs they need in order to stay alive gone unnoticed. One case documented by the African

HIV Policy Network in the UK involved 'Sitiwe', who lived in the UK and was on regular medication for HIV, but was deported to Zimbabwe in 2007. After a long struggle, she found a clinic that could treat her with the three-way combination drugs she requires. But there were days when Sitiwe was sent away empty handed from the clinic; on others the clinic could not provide her with all her combination.¹² Similar cases have been taken up by HIV-Sverige (an umbrella organisation for HIV+ rights) in Sweden.

Such returns are challenged whenever possible by lawyers and refugee support groups. But in a landmark ruling in May 2008, the European Court of Human Rights justified the harsh treatment of the severely ill.¹³ The Court ruled that the repatriation of Ms N, a Ugandan woman with AIDS living in the UK since 1998, does not amount to a violation of the Human Rights Convention although she will probably die within less than two years for lack of treatment.

An editorial in the British medical journal *The Lancet* (15 January 2008) described the treatment of terminally-ill cancer patient Ama Sumani as a case of 'atrocious barbarism'. 'To stop treating patients in the knowledge that they are being sent home to die is an unacceptable breach of the duties of any health professional'. Dr Barry Moran, Archbishop of Wales, reminded us that 'You cannot follow the letter of law when it comes to immigration because we are dealing with individual human beings, not commodities.' But the chief executive of the border and immigration agency said that the expulsion was not exceptional and as there were many in the same heart-rending situation, an exception could not be made.¹⁴

Medical neglect in detention centres

Alongside the target-driven deportation policies has gone a substantial increase in the number of people held in immigration removal centres, where people can now be held for up to eighteen months, and where, in many parts of Europe, overcrowding, deplorable sanitary conditions and poor safety standards are rife. The deaths of eleven migrants in the October 2005 fire at Schiphol airport detention centre in Amsterdam led some sections of the media to highlight poor safety standards in immigration removal centres, as did the partial destruction of Yarl's Wood detention centre in a fire in 2002. Medical professionals are now drawing attention to the substandard levels of medical care in immigration removal centres. Five of the deaths we record relate directly to their concerns, as do several other cases of suicide otherwise than in detention, which we discuss further below.

One death occurred in Switzerland, where **Abdi Daub**, a 40-year-old Somalian, died of tuberculosis at the detention centre at Kloten airport. According to the human rights organisation Augenauf, he had been given insufficient medicine to counter the disease. In the Netherlands, refugee support groups have long attempted to draw attention to substandard health care experienced by detainees held in container ships moored in Rotterdam and other harbours. Now, after two deaths, an independent inquiry is sought. Algerian **Rachid Abdelsalam** died on the night of 2/3 February 2008, on board the *Bibby Stockholm* in Amsterdam. There are allegations that his heart irregularities were being treated with cough mixture. Detainees have also made allegations of substandard health care in the case of the Egyptian diabetes patient, **Ahmad Mahmud El Sabah**, who died on board another floating Rotterdam detention boat. Detainees say that El Sabah was suffering from a liver condition but was only taken to hospital when his condition had deteriorated to such an extent that his life could not be saved.

Nothing galvanises detainees more than to know that a sick inmate is being denied assistance or care in the case of emergency. The information soon spreads throughout the detention centre, leading to potentially volatile situations. Indeed, the death of Tunisian **Hassan Fathji** (described in some newspaper reports as Moroccan Hassan Nejl) at the Brunelleschi Turin CPT (identification and expulsion centre) on 24 May 2008, in circumstances that remain unclear, led to a two-day hunger strike. And in July 2008 there was further unrest at Brunelleschi, after another young Moroccan was saved by his fellow detainees from an attempted suicide, only to be deported several hours later.¹⁵ But the most serious unrest occurred at Vincennes detention centre in Val-de-Marne in June 2008. Vincennes - France's largest administrative detention centre - was partially destroyed by the fire that engulfed the centre following the death of 41-year-old Tunisian detainee **Belkacem Souli**.

In both these cases, as well as the three others listed in this category, the authorities have been accused of failure to render emergency assistance to a sick or dying person. In the case of the Algerian **Rachid Abdelsalam**, who died on a Rotterdam boat, fellow detainees said that although they warned the guards of

Abdelsalam's deteriorating condition, it was only two hours after he died that guards actually opened his cell door. News of the death was only made public because the detainees contacted elected representatives of the Socialist Party, who then tabled a parliamentary question. The lack of appropriate medical care in Italian CPTs (Centres for Temporary Stay and Assistance) was criticised in a December 2007 report by the civil liberties and justice committee of the European parliament. The Red Cross, which runs the CPT in which the Egyptian diabetes patient **Hassan Fathji** died, vigorously denies allegations that it failed to provide adequate medical care. The Italian authorities, furthermore, released information which, while acknowledging that Fathji was suffering from acute pneumonia, seemed to suggest that his death was linked to a drugs overdose, claiming he was being treated with methadone for drug addiction. However, detainees – who went on hunger strike to protest the death – claim that they had repeatedly asked the authorities to assist the sick man and call for emergency help, but no assistance was rendered. Friends of **Belkacem Souli**, the Tunisian who died of a heart attack at the Vincennes detention centre, also say that calls for assistance for the dying man were repeatedly ignored and that intervention only came two hours after the first calls for help. Detainees say the Tunisian was ill, that he should never have been detained, and that the heart attack was brought on by stress and the bad conditions at the centre. An autopsy report has never been made public. Fifteen days prior to Souli's death and the subsequent partial destruction of the Vincennes centre in the fire that engulfed it, the National Commission for the Control of Retention Centres (CRAZA) had told immigration minister Brice Hortefeux that the climate of tension and violence at Vincennes was such that the slightest thing could light the fuse.¹⁶ The Committee in Aid of Evacuees (CIMADE) had earlier reported that the conditions at Vincennes (cramped rooms, little space for exercise, highly restricted human contact etc) had given rise to regular suicide attempts, incidents of self-harm and fights.

The factors that lead to suicide

So far, most cases have involved allegations that the authorities colluded through force in, or contributed via medical neglect to, the deaths of migrants and asylum seekers. But where does blame lie when asylum seekers or migrants take their own lives? Although our tally is most certainly an under-estimate, the suicide of asylum seekers and migrants, whether in detention, desperate in the community or destitute on the streets, is the largest category of deaths we have documented, totalling nearly one half (twenty-five cases in all) of the total tally of deaths. There is also substantial concern over escalating incidents involving suicide attempts and self-harm amongst asylum seekers. The Danish association Helping Refugees records that attempted suicides in Danish detention centres have tripled proportionately since 2001.¹⁷ And in spring 2008, five hundred doctors wrote an open letter to the Danish parliament condemning the long detention of asylum seekers and the detrimental impact detention has on their health.

Detention and dispersal

In its briefing paper 'Asylum deaths – what to do next', the IRR notes that many asylum seekers come to Europe with complex health needs. The reasons for flight – persecution, war, conflict and torture – create health issues that require treatment. But this trauma is often compounded by the perilous routes refugees are forced to take as they flee. Detention in immigration removal centres is guaranteed to create yet more stress, while the threat of deportation hanging over asylum seekers often leads to feelings of hopelessness. Everything the asylum seeker experiences – from the disbelief that surrounds their asylum claim, to the laws that forbid them to work and refocus their lives, to the final inhumanities of detention and deportation – seems designed to break their will and resolve. Having created the conditions in which self-harm will flourish, the authorities make only cursory attempts to introduce suicide prevention measures into detention centres, and in many cases simply avert their gaze from the emotional trauma of the vulnerable.

It is well-known that the highest risk of self-harm comes once a removal notice has been served on an asylum seeker. In Belgium, **Ebenezer Folefack Sontsa**, detained since 2006, was subjected to a violent forced deportation attempt (see above), suffering trauma to his body. He was clearly at risk of self-harm when he was returned to Merksplas detention centre in Belgium, yet the authorities placed him in an isolation cell, where he used his bed-sheets to strangle himself in the bathroom. As news of his death spread throughout the detention centre, violence erupted and the police were called in.

It is not just immigration officials or private escorts who should be blamed for the suicide of asylum

seekers and migrants. The German medical profession has long since highlighted the degradation of medical ethics that occurs when the police medical services and other medical professionals collude with the authorities in their deportation drive. After the suicide of a Tunisian asylum seeker in the Berlin Grünau pre-deportation centre, the Refugee Council questioned why the police medical service had certified the man fit for detention, and demanded a thorough investigation.

Two particularly sad cases, involving the deaths of asylum seekers dispersed to asylum hostels, reveal the perils to emotional well-being faced by individuals caught up in a system that obliterates all positive identity and condemns them to a life that they come to believe is not worth living. In a German asylum hostel in Rostock, a 35-year-old disabled Iraqi asylum seeker took a fatal overdose, and in an Irish hostel in Galway, the 27-year-old South African mother of a two-year-old girl starved herself to death.

Soran Ali Korshid, who had been the victim of torture in Iraq, suffered from asthma and panic attacks. Before taking an overdose, 35-year-old Korshid had written a farewell note in which he stated 'I'm sick and can't stay like this in the asylum seekers' hostel'. Lawyers and friends absolved the asylum hostel staff of any blame, saying that social workers there had done their level best to give Korshid a decent standard of care. Lawyer Thomas Waine spoke of the frustration he felt when reading the suicide note left by his client. 'He was a calm person who had been a teacher of children in his homeland.' But 'a lack of prospects, reduced social welfare benefits, few opportunities to learn German, no prospect to earn one's own living – these are the problems. The system makes people sick'.

These comments could equally be applied to the circumstances that led to the death of **Brenda Kwesikazi Mohammed** in Galway, Ireland. The South African mother, who was married to a Nigerian asylum seeker, had come to Ireland alone in 2004 and was able to be reunited with her Nigerian husband only in 2006. Widower Bashiru Mohammed Daudo said his wife's death was due to the fact that she could not eat the food served at the hostel, where there was no provision for residents to cook. She had not eaten properly since she gave birth, and when her weight plummeted from 14 to six stone she had been diagnosed as suffering from post-natal depression. The family's trauma continued after the mother's death. Daudo had written to the authorities asking for an immediate transfer, stressing that his two-year-old daughter who had been with her mother when she died was deeply traumatised and the associations of the hostel were too painful. The letter was not even acknowledged, and no one at the Reception and Integration Agency expressed sympathy for the family's loss.

Suicides on the outside

The IRR, which attempts to monitor suicides of asylum seekers and migrants in the UK, states that while deaths of asylum seekers in state detention have to be reported to interested parties, there is no such official obligation to monitor the suicides of asylum seekers and those with immigration problems in the community. The 13 cases that are reported to have occurred outside detention centres or asylum hostels are therefore only those which refugee groups have managed to document, either because they have known the dead person or because the deaths have been reported in the media. The motivation for suicide in twelve of these thirteen cases are very similar to the factors that led to suicide in detention centres. In the remaining case, **Imran Yousaf**, a 28-year-old doctor from Pakistan, hanged himself in Bedford, UK in January 2007 after becoming severely depressed due to government changes in the immigration rules which gave preferential treatment to UK postgraduates in employment. Yousaf had come to the UK to work in the NHS (he was also studying for a Royal College of Physicians postgraduate qualification) after learning that the British health service was in desperate need of overseas doctors. In order to fund this trip and future career prospects, the young medic had used up all his family savings and borrowed heavily from friends. A letter was found beside his body from immigration officials stating that he could expect no further extensions to his visa. Dr Rajendra Chaudhary, who had been receiving distraught emails from Dr Yousaf, said 'He felt let down by the Department of Health and decided that he couldn't face going back to Pakistan with such a huge debt.' Dr Ramesh Mehta, president of the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO), which backed a legal action against the Department of Health on behalf of Yousaf and other affected doctors, said that he knew of 'at least two other cases of suicide in these circumstances in the last several months', adding that the whole manner of the way the government went about changing the rules was 'completely immoral and inhuman'. Subsequently, the courts ruled that the authorities had acted illegally in their treatment of postgraduate medical students such as Dr Yousaf.¹⁸

Just as with suicides in detention, the other twelve deaths came after individuals experienced long periods of waiting for a positive decision on an asylum claim. In France, friends of the gifted 19-year-old athlete **John Maina**, who had desperately tried to rebuild his life and escape the trauma he had suffered in Kenya where he had been enlisted into paramilitary groups, were devastated when he committed suicide in February 2008 after his asylum claim was rejected. John Maina needed specialist care but, as with so many of the children who arrive in Europe alone, officials responded to a teenager's trauma with indifference. In four other cases, where the victims set fire to themselves in protest at their treatment by asylum and immigration officials, it is not entirely clear whether the victims intended to kill themselves. One of these cases involved a Romanian family who migrated to Spain after being offered employment, which included accommodation. But the promises were bogus, and the family could only get by through the collection of scrap metal and by selling soft drinks on the beach. The family's 44-year-old father went to the Spanish authorities and pleaded with them to pay for the family's repatriation, but his pleas fell on deaf ears. He died fifteen days after setting himself on fire outside the offices of the prefect in Castell, near Valencia. In the UK, **Uddhav Bhandari**, a 40-year-old asylum seeker from Nepal, died eleven days after setting fire to himself at the offices of the asylum and immigration tribunal in Glasgow. Bhandari, formerly a police officer in Nepal who had fallen foul of the authorities, had lived in the UK with his family for six years before his asylum claim was rejected. He was terrified of being returned to Nepal and set fire to himself as he was about to launch his final appeal.

For those who are stateless, who do not have a passport or a state that will receive them if removed, the threat of deportation also leads to extreme emotional turmoil and feelings of the deepest insecurity. **Vera Filantova** had no homeland. Born in Kyrgyzstan to a Russian mother and a Kyrgyzstani father, she faced refusal by the governments of both her parents' birth countries when she sought their recognition as a citizen after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Filantova moved to the Netherlands and claimed asylum, but even though the Dutch authorities recognised that they could not deport her, as she had no nationality, they refused her asylum claim. For a while she lived clandestinely but then, apprehended by the police, she was sent to a detention centre. After seven months in detention, she was released, having been told to leave the country within 72 hours. By this stage Vera Filantova's health was very poor. The 47-year-old woman was suffering from acute depression, and she committed suicide because she could see no way of starting a life elsewhere. A similar pattern of events led to the suicide in 2008 of **Marin Mogos**, a 57-year-old stateless Roma who fled to Germany from Romania in 1990 only to be returned to Romania twelve years later when his asylum application failed. Campaigners stress that Germany is responsible for the circumstances that led to his death, hence Marin Mogos' death is listed under the German, and not the Romanian country heading in our tally of death, even though he hanged himself in the no-man's land of Bucharest airport's transit area where he had lived alongside his wife and two children for five years. Like thousands of other Roma from Romania, Mogos had renounced his Romanian citizenship, but because he had not gained German citizenship, he was effectively stateless. From the day of his removal to Romania, he lived alongside his wife and two children in a locked room in Bucharest airport's transit area. After five years of living like this, Mogos, who was diabetic and was receiving inadequate care, committed suicide.

The health system and immigration status

In three other cases, involving the treatment of patients within national health systems in Sweden and the UK, there have been allegations that the asylum or immigration status of the patient led to the provision of substandard care, contributing to the stress and suffering the patients experienced and perhaps causing or contributing to death. The family lawyer of **Mohammed Ahmedi**, an Iraqi asylum seeker with a heart condition who died in Gloucester Royal Hospital in England, expressed concern that he was not treated adequately because doctors were preoccupied with clarifying his immigration status. Eighty-year-old **Mohamed Ali** died of lung cancer in London in 2008 after suffering two years of unnecessary stress as NHS debt collectors wrongfully pursued him for hospital bills that he should not have had to pay as he was lawfully resident in the UK. In these cases, it may never be known whether death would have ensued anyway. But in one case the answer is clear. In April 2008, medical students and hospital employees staged coordinated demonstrations in six towns in Sweden, demanding that migrants without papers be given the health care they urgently need. The Swedish National Board for Health and Welfare had officially reprimanded

a hospital in Karlskrona for the wrong and fatal diagnosis of a 25-year-old asylum seeker by its staff, exacerbated by fourteen months' delay in reporting the allegations against them to the health board. The man, who was vomiting and experiencing painful headaches, was, unbeknown to them, suffering a cerebral haemorrhage. But he was not even given a physical examination; he was sent instead for emergency psychiatric care after a duty doctor concluded that his symptoms were a 'by-product of the asylum process'. It took three days, and repeated visits to the hospital, before a head scan was ordered. This revealed a small haemorrhage in the brain. Following surgery, the asylum seeker was judged to be well enough to be sent home. But as he was about to be released, he lost consciousness and collapsed. Diagnosed with a large cerebral haemorrhage, he was then taken for emergency surgery, but doctors were unable to save his life.

The growth of immigration policing

Ever since 2003, when the EU Expulsions Agency was formed, the EU seems to be ploughing a greater percentage of its financial resources into deportation than into initiatives that promote the integration of refugees into European society. Every month the activities of the EU Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the EU member states (FRONTEX) seem to increase as this ever-expanding body eats up euros, manpower and resources. (There was a €30 million increase in its 2008 budget.) At a member-state level too, immigration policing is a rapidly growing area of policing. As performance targets are set for the apprehension of the undocumented, police snatch squads have been formed to carry out dawn raids on homes and workplaces. And the purpose of too many police patrols and identity checks in the cities of Europe is not to fight crime but to hunt down and apprehend illegal immigrants. When police departments discover that governments are willing to increase resources for immigration policing, they have a vested interest in promoting police units which serve an immigration, not a crime-fighting function.

The result of governments' targets culture, therefore, is the growth of immigration policing. And the result of immigration policing is untold fear within migrant communities and ultimately the serious injury and even death of those who believe themselves pursued by the immigration police. Absolutely panic-stricken in the face of a dawn raid or as a consequence of a police identity check, those hunted may attempt to avoid apprehension. Deaths following police identity checks or immigration raids accounts for nearly a quarter of the deaths documented here (a total of thirteen cases). In previous years in which the IRR has monitored Europe's asylum and immigration-related deaths, such deaths did not signify to anywhere near this extent.

Three of these thirteen deaths occurred in France, where in 2007, President Nicolas Sarkozy set one target for deportations (25,000) and another target for apprehensions of foreigners for illegal entry or unauthorised stay (125,000), with local prefects given individual quotas. In September 2007, immigration minister Brice Hortefeux summoned some 20 local government heads and demanded that they 'improve their figures' and step up deportations. Since then there have been numerous injuries (including that of a 12-year-old schoolboy who suffered serious head injuries after falling four floors from a window while fleeing with his father from a police raid) and three deaths. **Chulun Liua**, a 51-year-old Chinese woman who had left her only son in northern China to seek work in France, died after throwing herself out of a window to avoid a police raid in Paris in September 2007. Then on 4 April 2008, a 29-year-old Malian migrant (whose name is unknown) fleeing a police identity check (during which one police officer commandeered a scooter) died of a heart attack in a Paris suburb after jumping into the river Marne. After the Malian's death, thousands of people demonstrated in Paris to draw attention to the consequences of inhuman French immigration policies. Film director Marie Vermillard, who witnessed the police pursuit, asked 'What would have happened without the police's persistence? This mad pursuit after a man who ran and who had done nothing? Not a criminal, not even a petty crime [had been committed]. No, just a man, who ran because he didn't have papers and ended up dying in this river in a Paris suburb.'

Similar circumstances led to the deaths of **Andy Bestman** in Basel, Switzerland, **Tony Onuoha** in Thessalonika, Greece, **Mike Osey** in the Dutch city of Amsterdam and **Frank Odame** in Essex, England. The dead men were all African migrants or asylum seekers; three suffered serious head injuries after jumping from considerable heights in order to avoid arrest and in the case of the fourth man, **Andy Bestman**, who jumped into a river in Basel, there are allegations that the Swiss authorities failed to launch a rescue attempt. **Tony Onuoha** and **Mike Osey** both had previous experiences with police; they were terrified of any further

encounter. Osey, a 34-year-old migrant from Ghana who fell to his death in the Biljmer district of Amsterdam, had only recently been released from the Zeist detention centre, where he had been held for ten months whilst unsuccessful attempts were made to deport him. He was terrified of being incarcerated again. Although **Tony Onuoha** had a residence permit, a previous encounter with the police, who accused him of selling pirated CDs, had left him with a broken leg and fearful of any further contact with police. A feeling of panic also overwhelmed **Andy Bestman** when he was faced with a police identity check; his asylum claim had failed and he was under immediate threat of deportation. The Basel canton's public prosecutor's office has been accused of attempting to obscure the circumstances that surround Bestman's death and of bypassing calls for an official inquiry. It had suggested that drugs were found on the young man's corpse when it was dredged from the river several days after he made the fatal leap. African organisations, who criticised the public prosecutor for revealing details from the autopsy report to the press, point out that the equation 'young, black, drugs' is widespread in Switzerland, as is the belief that black people only run away from the police because of drugs.

Just as in France, where thousands of people demonstrated after the drowning of the Malian migrant, these deaths have given rise to considerable protest. Although this has been mostly within the African community, there has been some support from the wider community. In Greece, the leader of Thessalonika regional council expressed regret for 'the death of the young Nigerian' which 'reminds us all of the hardships Greeks had to endure only a few decades back to make a living as migrants' and called for a full and thorough investigation. In the Netherlands, the African Roots Movement and the foundation XminY Solidariteitsfonds have organised a more organised and permanent response to increasing raids and police racism in general, which has resulted in the opening up of a dialogue with the local police.

In two further cases, in Greece and Cyprus, police responsibility for the death of the migrant was more direct. Here, migrants were actually shot dead by police as they attempted to avoid pursuit. And although we do not include one other police death by shooting in 2007/2008 in our table of asylum and immigration-related deaths, as the shooting occurred in Morocco, we consider the August 2007 death of a sub-Saharan African who was shot dead by Moroccan police while trying to reach the Spanish Canary Islands¹⁹ to be a consequence of the pressure the EU has placed on North African countries to act as immigration police for Europe.

On the European mainland, the fact that an Albanian died after being reportedly shot in the back as he ran away raises the question: what threat could he possibly have posed to the police to justify this killing? In another case which raises equally worrying questions about the conduct of police, the Spanish Committee of Aid to Refugees (CEAR) alleges that **Lauling Sonko**, a 29-year-old irregular migrant, drowned while attempting to reach Ceuta after police intercepted the inflatable dinghy in which he and three other migrants were travelling and towed it back to Moroccan waters, where they proceeded to cut a hole in it. As the dinghy floundered 100 metres from the shore and the migrants on board struggled to keep afloat, police officers sat on the beach laughing. When it became evident that Sonko could not swim, one of the officers attempted to rescue him, but it was too late. CEAR claims that Sonko had told the police officers that he could not swim, but he was ignored. A fact-finding mission carried out by the Group of Lawyers from Athens and the German refugee support organisation Pro Asyl concluded that the practice of damaging rubber dinghies and forcing them back into Turkish territorial waters was also happening in Greece. What happens to the passengers on board is unknown. Indeed, allegations of violence against the Greek police and border guards are mounting. In April 2008, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees levelled sharp criticism at Greek asylum and detention policies and recommended that other European states not return asylum seekers to Greece, and in December, Human Rights Watch issued a report alleging that unaccompanied migrant children arriving in Greece are at risk of incidents of torture such as mock executions, and inhuman or degrading treatment, including routine kickings and beatings.²⁰ Questions also remain over the Greek police's account of the death of a Pakistani migrant who died after apparently falling into a river bed while fleeing from the police following clashes between asylum seekers queuing at the Aliens Bureau in Votanikos, near Central Athens.²¹ Campaigners called for an investigation into the death and a demonstration of over 3,000 people was held in the Greek capital. Subsequently, in December 2008, violence erupted in central Athens, after news that another asylum-seeker had been injured, again fleeing from the police in Votanikos, and again falling into the same river bed. Then, on 3 January 2009, came news that the body of a 30-year-old

Bangladeshi asylum-seeker had been recovered from the same river bed.²²

The impact of dawn raids and immigration snatch squads can be particularly traumatic for children, as the IRR has previously documented in its 2007 report *They Are Children Too*. But police do not seem to give much thought to the impact on infants and toddlers of massive immigration swoops. In one incident in France in 2007, 80 police officers laid siege to a warehouse in the Parisian suburb of Aubervilliers, where Chinese migrants were employed making garments. A Chinese family legally resident in France, who lived in lodgings in the same building, had to suffer the trauma of hearing police breaking down doors, chasing terrified migrants and causing general mayhem. The youngest person to die an immigration control-related death in 2007/8 was the family's two-month-old baby girl. She was found to have stopped breathing after being put down to sleep in the room next to the raided workshop. An autopsy concluded that the cause of death was sudden infant death syndrome. The Aubervilliers Vigilance Committee supported the family's call for a medical inquiry to determine the cause of the baby's death; they asked, what were the consequences of the stress to the baby generated by the police operation?

Organisations to contact for further information

Pro Asyl proasyl@proasyl.de

Platform for Intercultural Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) info@picum.org

Migreurop <www.migreurop.org>

United for Intercultural Action info@unitedagainstracism.org

Footnotes

1 Liz Fekete, *The Deportation Machine: Europe, asylum and human rights*, IRR, 2005.

2 See Statewatch News Online, 6 September 2007.

3 Medical Justice, Birnberg Peirce & Partners & NCADC, *Outsourcing abuse: the use and misuse of state-sanctioned force during the detention and removal of asylum seekers*, (London, 2008).

4 See 'Five years on Europe is still ignoring its responsibilities towards Iraqi refugees', a statement by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, ECRE, March 2008; Press Release, International Rescue Committee, 18 March 2008.

5 The case was monitored by the Swedish Helsinki Committee. See <www.shc.se>

6 In the UK, only the intervention of the courts prevented the deportation of several alleged members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) to Libya, where they risked a similar fate. See <www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2008/289.html>

7 Concerns about the torture of refugees is not confined to national security detainees. In 2007, the Aegis Trust presented evidence that refugees returned from Britain to Darfur had been tortured. See *Guardian* 28, 29 March 2007. Also in 2007, the Norwegian authorities, under pressure from the UNHCR, agreed that a Kurdish family forcibly returned to Syria could return to Norway after it emerged that the father, Yassin Suleiman, had been arrested and tortured in Syria. As reported in *UNHCR Baltic & Nordic Headlines*, 7 July 2007.

8 AI, *Italy: A briefing to the UN Committee Against Torture*, <www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR30/003/2007/en/dom-EUR300032007en.html>

9 *Yle*, 9 May 2008.

10 Cases documented by FARR and cited in *UNHCR Baltic & Nordic Headlines*, 27-30 April 2007.

11 *NRK*, 5 March 2008.

12 As reported in the *Guardian*, 1 December 2008.

13 *N v UK* (26565/05) 27 May 2008.

14 *Migration News Sheet*, February, April 2008.

15 The website of Progetto Melting Pot further alleges that drugs are being used inside the Turin CPT to sedate detainees, that sanitary conditions are deplorable and that detainees are subjected to constant verbal abuse by law enforcement officers. In one case reported in the media, a Tunisian migrant was allegedly rendered deaf in one ear after a beating triggered by his resistance to deportation. The website also documents a case of alleged serious violence against a 29-year-old Brazilian transsexual detained at the Via Corelli CPT in Milan.

16 As cited in 'France: immigrant retention centre burnt down following death of inmate', World Socialist Web Site, 29 June 2008.

17 *Migration News Sheet*, July 2007, p.17.

18 R v BAPIO Action Ltd v Secretary of State,

<<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldjudgmt/jd080430/bapio-1.htm>>

19 See UNITED's *List of 11105 documented refugee deaths through Fortress Europe*. <http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/pdfs/actual_listofdeath.pdf> In the latest of such death, on New Year's Day 2009 police shot dead a sub-Saharan African attempting to enter Spain's North African enclave at Melilla. *El Pais*, 2 January 2009.

20 Human Rights Watch, *Left to Survive: Systematic failure to protect unaccompanied migrant children in Greece*, <www.hrw.org/en/reports/2008/12/22/left-survive>

21 Human rights organisations have criticised the authorities for the inadequate system for making asylum claims, leading to inhumanity and brutality. As the Aliens Bureau in Votanikos accepts asylum applications only once a week, on Saturdays, asylum seekers are forced to queue up outside the office on Friday nights to stand a chance of being among the few allowed to submit a claim. See *Migration News Sheet*, January 2009, p.10.

22 *ibid*.

Deaths related to racism, fascism and intolerance

Problems with methodology

Most certainly, there will be cases that we have missed from our listing of 39 deaths (see appendix B) that occurred in 2007 and 2008 where racism, fascism or intolerance was, in our view, a leading factor. And even in the cases that we have managed to track down and investigate, it has not always been easy to establish, beyond doubt, that the killings were racially-motivated, or linked in other ways to intolerance and hostility towards cultural diversity. Some might argue that it is for the courts, not social commentators to pronounce on whether killings are racially motivated or not. But how can one rely on legal pronouncements, when police too often fail to gather evidence about the racial element of a crime and judges do not consider racial motivation in sentencing, even when there is strong evidence that racism or other forms of intolerance influenced the killer? The picture given by the courts does become clearer, however, in cases where members of neo-Nazi or other groups promoting intolerance are under investigation. Similarly, in some cases we document, there is evidence suggesting that killers had repeatedly targeted their victims for racial harassment and racist abuse and again, the motive is easier to establish. But there are other cases where the pattern of events is not as clear-cut. It is for this reason that we make a distinction in our list between racially-motivated murders and murders with a racial element. In the latter case, the location of the attack, the use of racist language, extreme brutality to deal with a minor confrontation, indicates to us that racism and related intolerance was a factor in the killing, but not the sole, or primary one.

On the other hand, it is not always easy to make a distinction between racially-motivated murders (a total of four cases) and those with a racial element (nineteen cases). Nevertheless, we have attempted to make such distinctions in our analysis on the basis of the limited evidence we have at our disposal. In so doing, we have been extremely cautious. In some cases where the killers are still awaiting trial, we have classified

Breakdown of deaths	
Far-Right (FR)	9
Possible far-Right (PFR)	6
Racial motivation (RM)	5
Racial element (RE)	18
Unable to classify (U)	1
Total number of deaths:	39
Deaths by country	
Italy	8
Germany	8
United Kingdom	7
Hungary	4
France	1
Ireland	2
Norway	2
Spain	2
Belgium	1
Bulgaria	1
Denmark	1
Slovakia	1
Czech Republic	1

the cases as having a racial element (RE) even when we have a strong belief that the details that will emerge at the trial will eventually prove the killing to be racially motivated. In two cases, in Germany and Italy, where court prosecutions are pending, we have classified the killings as racially motivated because to do otherwise would in our view legitimise racism. What but racism could lead a German man to murder a Vietnamese cigarette seller, simply because he has no papers, or two Italian men to beat to death an Italian-African teenager who they suspected of stealing a packet of biscuits?

In our list we include nine killings carried out by those connected to the far-Right scene in 2007 and 2008. Although all but one of these murders were not racially-motivated, the white Europeans who died at the hands of the neo-Nazis died because the intolerant creeds of racism and fascism spilled over into a hatred of anyone deemed different – ethnic minorities, gays, punks, the disabled, the homeless or the elderly. In a total of six other cases, the evidence is as yet not strong enough to prove beyond doubt a far-Right link to the killings. This is because police investigations are either ongoing, inconclusive, or inadequate or all three. But we include those deaths here which, although unproved as far-Right killings, took place in a context where racism towards minorities is rife. Four of the victims were Roma.

Deaths linked to far-Right

With the current economic downturn and the threat of recession looming large, many people are voicing concern that 2009 will be the year when the neo-Nazi and far-Right scene enjoys a resurrection. Already in 2007 and 2008, at least nine people died as the result of far-Right violence in Germany, Spain, Italy, Belgium and the Czech Republic. There is strong evidence that in Germany and Spain in particular the activities of small, violent neo-Nazi groups is out of control.

Germany

In Germany, in July 2008, a 55-year-old man, named only as **Bernd K**, was kicked to death by two young neo-Nazis who had been binge-drinking in Templin, a popular tourist destination in Brandenburg which has become a centre for the neo-Nazi scene. After kicking the man to death, the neo-Nazi youths attempted to set fire to his body. One month later, two more young German neo-Nazi killings took place. In August 2008, **Rick L**, a 20-year-old art student died in Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt after suffering serious internal injuries and suffocating on his own blood. He had been beaten to death by a 20-year-old known right-wing extremist with previous convictions for incitement to racial hatred and aggravated assault. In the other case, the body of 18-year-old **Marcel W** was found lying in a pool of blood in the town of Bernberg, Saxony-Anhalt. Marcel had been a repeated victim of a local neo-Nazi and was due to testify against him in court.

It is no coincidence that two of these attacks (as well as the death of another homeless man in November 2008) occurred in Saxony-Anhalt. In 2006, a report by the Office for the Defence of the Constitution, stated that Saxony-Anhalt was the region where the risk of being attacked by a racist thug was highest. *Der Spiegel*, which reported on all three killings, questioned why no other national media-outlet mentioned the killings. When *Der Spiegel* asked Saxony-Anhalt interior ministry's press office for a comment about the death of **Marcel W**, it found that it had not even heard of the neo-Nazi killing. (The police had classified it as an offence committed by young people under the influence of alcohol.) There was a similar lack of official concern in Templin where, following **Bernd K's** murder, the local authorities claimed that there was no evidence of right-wing activity in the town and the mayor, criticising the police investigation, appointed himself head of a new focus group to develop strategies against violence and political extremism.

Neo-Nazi violence in Germany has been persistent over the last ten years. In 2000, following the savage murder of the Mozambican Alberto Adriana in Dessau, a national strategy to counter right-wing extremism and promote tolerance and democracy was quickly launched, and nearly as quickly forgotten.¹ Similarly, in 2006, when the far-Right National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) secured six seats in the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania parliament, politicians looked for a quick-fix, suggesting a ban on the NPD, to its neo-nazi problem. Every couple of years come a flurry of reports and a demand for action, and then the issue seems to disappear from view, as do the fates of the victims of these atrocious crimes.² Then, in December 2008, with the near fatal stabbing of the head of police in the Bavarian city of Passau, came another wave of revulsion and shock. Alois Mannici had adopted a zero tolerance approach to far-Right crime and instructed his junior officers to step up observations of neo-Nazi rallies. One day in December, Mannici

opened the front-door of his home to find an assailant, who called him a 'left-wing police pig', gave 'greetings from the national resistance movement' and then stabbed him in the stomach. Suddenly, German intelligence services, which have focussed in recent years on the 'Islamic threat' and politicians like Chancellor Angela Merkel, who routinely demonises German youth of immigrant origins as 'foreign criminals', were alive to the serious threat posed by home-grown extreme-Right terrorism. Interior ministry figures were released suggesting that crimes and other offences committed by extreme-Right organisations rose by over one third in 2008.

Spain

Another country in denial about an ugly epidemic of neo-Nazi violence is Spain. Here, where small far-Right organisations are mushrooming,³ there has been an upsurge of racism since the May 2007 local and national regional elections. Then, Acoge, representing thirty-four NGOs, accused Mariano Rajoy's Popular Party of 'fertilising the ground in order to produce racial conflict in Spain'. In November 2007, **Carlos Javier Palomino Muos**, a 16-year-old Spanish teenager died after being stabbed through the heart and chest with a hunting knife in the Legazpi Metro Station, Madrid. The murder happened on the day of a neo-Nazi march in an immigrant neighbourhood and has been treated by the media and authorities as the result of a clash between rival political groups. The man arrested for the murder was a 24-year-old neo-Nazi and off duty soldier in the Spanish army.

Many other serious cases of racist violence in Spain are being similarly downplayed. The attack in Rute, Cordoba province on 30-year-old Romanian agricultural migrant worker, Tudorel Uistratescu, which left him paralysed, was described by his employer as 'racially motivated'. The immigration office immediately denied this, stating that Rute was not a violent town and 'drugs must be involved'.⁴ In another case, if it were not for the efforts of the Movement Against Intolerance and the Pan-Africanist Federation of Spain's Black Communities, Miwa Buene Monake, a 42-year-old economist from the DRC and interpreter for the Catholic Migration Association, would have been left entirely without support after an attack which left him permanently paralysed (tetraplegic).⁵ Monake suffered a blow to his spine in Alcalá de Henares in a racist attack carried out by a skinhead who hit him from behind while shouting 'Hey, you, monkey, you shouldn't be here, you belong in the zoo' and 'Long live Spain'. Seven months after the racist attack, the public prosecutor was not even aware of what happened to Monake, and the man accused of carrying out the attack was not in police custody. Sickened by the lack of official action, the Movement Against Intolerance brought its own 'people's prosecution' (a prosecution brought by a private individual or a citizens' group, which usually proceeds in parallel with the public prosecution). It also fought for Monake's two children and sister to be allowed to join him as the whole responsibility for caring for Monake had fallen on his wife, whose health was suffering. Now the Movement Against Intolerance, which has set up its own emergency help-line for the victims of racist violence, is calling for a full overhaul of the criminal justice system – to include a specialist prosecution service, a pro-active stance from the legal system, protection for victims, anti-racism legislation, and a computer system to organise data on this type of crime.

Italy

Just as in Spain, where the growth of racism has been linked to the racist climate generated by national and local elections, Italy has witnessed an outpouring of racism following the March 2008 general election which saw stunning gains for the post-fascist Alleanza Nazionale and the xenophobic Northern League. As mosques and Muslims were targeted by the Northern League for xenophobic invective and Roma camps were destroyed by petrol bombs in Naples, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg criticised the rise of racist and xenophobic incidents as well as increased discrimination against Roma and Sinti in government policies. The Northern League's promotion of vigilante committees to fight crime emboldened the far-Right and in Verona, **Nicola Tommasoli**, a 29-year-old Italian graphic designer was beaten to death by neo-Nazis on 1 May 2008, simply because he refused to give them a cigarette.⁶ Once again, the authorities were quick to downplay the significance of the murder. 'Verona is not a city of neo-fascists and it does not deserve this shameful label because of the actions of a few hooligans', opined Northern League mayor Flavio Tosi, while AN leader Gianfranco Fini declared on national television that the 1 May burning of the Israeli flag by the far-Left in Turin was 'much more serious' than the murder of Nicola Tommasoli.

Belgium

The final case listed in this far-Right category occurred in Belgium, a country where courts only recognised its first racially-motivated murder in 2007.⁷ It involves the death of **Raphael Mensah**, a 50-year-old Parisian black artist who died on 10 April 2007, about a year after he and a friend were attack by a group of five skinheads in the Flemish town of Bruges. The attack left him in a coma for two months. When Mensah finally regained consciousness, he had lost him memory. The cause of his death is believed to be a respiratory ailment that was most probably linked to the brutal attack he suffered. But, as the autopsy could not prove a direct link between the respiratory ailment and his death, it does not appear that the charge of assault and battery against his aggressor can now be changed to manslaughter. Similar concerns about the difficulty in establishing the long-term damage to health caused by far-Right brutality were aired following the death on 28 December 2008 of a 14-year-old mixed-race youth (named only as **Kevin**) in Thuringia, Germany. At the age of 12, the boy, who was living in a children's home in Pömmelte, Saxony-Anhalt, was racially abused by a group of four neo-Nazis who proceeded to torture him for over an hour. They beat him, urinated on him, burned his face with cigarettes and forced him at gunpoint to lick their boots. The boy suffered thirty-four injuries, including concussion and a broken nose and was left psychologically traumatised.⁸ The public prosecutor's office in Erfurt is investigating whether his death was linked to his earlier injuries. Because the medical report is still not complete we cannot definitely classify it as a far-Right murder in our Table of Deaths. (Appendix B).

Possibility of far-Right link

Evidence would suggest a strong possibility of a far-Right motive for killings which occurred in Hungary and Norway. In Hungary, where the Political Capital Think Tank has warned that rising support for the far-Right has coincided with increasing prejudice against Roma,⁹ the Hungarian Guard has been organising vigilante squads in villages.¹⁰ In June and July 2008, firebombs were thrown at Roma homes in areas near Budapest. Then, in November 2008, four Roma were killed in two separate incidents. In the first of these murders, a Roma man and woman, died from gunshot wounds. Petrol bombs had been thrown at houses in the village of Nagycsec, and as the man and woman tried to flee their house, unknown assailants sprayed them with bullets. In the second incident, a man and a woman were killed (and their two children suffered minor injuries) after a grenade was thrown through the window of their home in Pecs, southern Hungary. In the second case, the local police were quick to rule out racial motivation, prompting strong words from Erno Kallai, national ombudsman in charge of national and ethnic minority rights. He pointed out that even though 'we don't know if the crime was racially motivated or not', it was not the duty of police to pass judgement on a victim even before they began their investigation. Commenting on the wider picture, Kallai added that the 'ethnicity of victims and the types of crime lead us to think that these attacks are not coincidental. Roma who live on the periphery of society, who are most vulnerable, who are the subject of prejudice, Roma are under attack.'

In a case which may well have a far-Right link, the Norwegian Police Security Service – the brief of which includes monitoring the extreme-Right – were drafted in by local police to help in the investigation of the killing of a 16-year-old Somali refugee, who died after a sniper fired at long range from a nearby forest at the Hvalstad reception centre for asylum-seeking children in Asker, south-west of Oslo.¹¹ Police say the shooting, which took place on a day that was symbolically important to neo-Nazis, was well-planned and executed by someone clearly familiar with the area. Although a 50-year-old lawyer with extreme racist views confessed to the killing, he was later released as it became clear he was a fantasist with an alcohol problem. The Children's Ombudsman was amongst those who noted how the lack of media interest in the death of this 16-year-old child contrasted with great media interest in incidents where asylum seekers were accused of perpetrating violence.

In another German case which should be noted, nine Turkish Germans died in a fire in Ludwigshafen in February 2008. But as, one year on, the police investigation remains inconclusive, it is possible to ascertain whether the fire was started deliberately by the far-Right, as some believe, or was the result of a tragic accident, or other reasons, as German politicians maintains. The Turkish government has expressed their disappointment at the German police's handling of the investigation into these fire-deaths.

Racial element or racial motivation

Racism played some part in the deaths of twenty-three people who were killed in attacks which took place in Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain, Slovakia and the UK. In six of these cases, the police considered racism as a probable or possible motive for the killings (although only two of these cases has come to trial at the time of writing).

According to police in Trondheim, Norway, the man arrested for the murder of **Mahmed Jamal Shirwac**, who died after thirteen shots were pumped into his car, had expressed highly negative views towards ethnic minorities on several newspaper websites. Prior to the murder, the suspect had written a note stating that he planned 'to murder Muslims if the opportunity presented itself'. For that reason, they were prosecuting it as a racially motivated crime (the case will come to trial in April 2009). A Slovakian judge also agreed that the 17-year-old who repeatedly hit a 14-year-old Romany schoolboy with an axe in Jasov, East Slovakia, and then pushed the body of the boy into a brook and fled the scene, was racially motivated. The remaining four cases all occurred in the UK. Here Hampshire police forwarded evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to suggest that racial motivation influenced a 20-strong gang to pick on **Gregory Fernandes**, a 32-year-old Indian seaman and beat him to death near Fawley Oil Refinery. (The trial is pending.) Police have also charged one man with racially-aggravated common assault following the death of **Muhammad al-Majed**, a 16-year-old Arab student from Qatar, who was set upon by a drunken gang shouting racist abuse in the seaside resort of Hastings. In the case of **Asaf Mohmood Ahmed**, who suffered an asthma attack during a savage assault by a drunken gang in Bolton (he was prevented from using his inhaler when one of the men kicked it out his hands), both police and judge agreed that the assault had a distinct racial element, even though the CPS did not prosecute the murder as racially motivated. Similarly, in the case of **Adam Michalski**, a Polish migrant worker stabbed to death in Wrexham, the use of racial abuse prior to the murder was evidence that the case had a racist element. In Liverpool, it was also acknowledged that the killers of **Michael Moran**, a 21-year-old mixed race man who was stabbed to death in Garston, Liverpool, were in part motivated by racism as Moran and his family had been subjected to a campaign of racist abuse by a gang in the months up to his death.¹²

In the remaining cases, racism was not considered by prosecuting services or courts as a contributory factor to death. (In some of these cases, racism was actively denied in the passage between arrest and conviction.) Yet, paradoxically, many of these cases are remarkably similar to those cases where racial motivation was acknowledged. There is simply no consistency in prosecuting and sentencing around Europe (or even within each European member state) and this is linked to the wider failure to develop a pan-European understanding of racism and ways of countering it.

'Random' violence and racial hostility

Part of the reason for the lack of consistency is that many of the cases are not straightforward. There has undoubtedly been a growth of random violence, linked to territorialism, gang culture and the breakdown of community, in many parts of Europe. While deaths linked to this random violence are not caused by members of far-Right organisations, what is striking is that the behaviour of the killers is so similar to the neo-Nazis. Like much neo-Nazi violence, these cases involve marauding gangs, or groups of poorly-educated drunken young people from deprived areas, or individuals high on drugs or drink. They attack the victim for the sheer pleasure of doing so and with the intent of causing grievous injury but do not set out to kill a member of an ethnic minority simply because of hatred of their colour, or of their difference. In a drunken orgy of violence, for instance, they attack someone, who on the face of things, just happen not to be white, or have a foreign accent. In these cases a person's skin colour or perceived foreigner-status appears to mark them out to the attackers as someone whose value does not matter, who is almost sub-human. Maybe these were not racially motivated crimes in the strictest of sense, but they were nonetheless crimes with a racial element. As such, racism was an aggravating factor in the offence and this should be acknowledged by the courts, but is not.

In this respect, the judge's comments following the death of Asaf Mahmood Ahmed in Bolton, England, were instructive.¹³ During the case, the CPS had argued that the killing was not racially motivated, even though it acknowledged that one of the killers had a very nasty attitude towards Asian people. The CPS

argued that the two young men who murdered Ahmed were drunk and had earlier carried out an assault on a white man in the neighbourhood. Because of this 'the probable motive was to inflict random violence whether to a white man... or to an Asian man'. But the judge in his summing up took the view that this random violence was also linked to racial hostility. As the two killers awaited sentencing, he told them, 'You were clearly in the mood, both of you, to assault anyone who appeared to be fair game. It was fun beating Mr Ahmed up. To cause him pain and suffering gave you pleasure... I have no doubt the pleasure you derived at the time of the assault was all the greater because the victim happened to be Asian.'

The same kind of judicial comments could just as well have been made in the other cases we have documented, but weren't. In Denmark, **Deniz Ozgur Uzun**, a 16-year-old Danish paperboy of Turkish origin, died a day after being attacked by three youths armed with baseball bats in the Amager district of Copenhagen.¹⁴ Since the so-called 'cartoons affair', it has become very difficult to initiate discussions about racism in Denmark. The murder took place in an area where gangs were reportedly out of control and this, it would seem, was enough for the police and the youth counselling facility in Amager district to categorically rule out a racist motivation. Even the Muslim Council of Denmark followed this line, issuing a statement agreeing that it was wrong to presume that racism was a factor in the death. Yet friends of the student who witnessed the attack by three youths armed with baseball bats say that the perpetrators shouted, 'what at you looking at, perker swine before they beat him to death'. (The term 'perker' is a racist expression often used in Denmark to express dislike of foreigners; it is associated with the word Persian but it is used to describe any foreigner.) When the case came to trial in December 2008, three teenagers, aged 16, 18 and 19 years were detained for sentences ranging from three to four and a half years. The judge described the killing as an 'accident' since the boy, who hit him, did not intend to kill him.

Another case, which was deemed to have arisen from random violence, youth hooliganism and underage drinking, occurred in Ireland where two young Polish migrant workers, **Marius Szwajkos** and **Pawel Kalite**, died after a group of drunken Irish teenagers stabbed Marius in the throat and Pawel through the skull – simply because they refused to buy the gang alcoholic drinks. On a state visit to Poland, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, said there was no racial element involved.¹⁵ Yet at a huge demonstration held in Drimnagh to protest the murders, migrant workers said they were living in fear of racist incidents and that the authorities were not doing enough to tackle these crimes. Clearly, many in the migrant community felt there was a racial element to these brutal murders.¹⁶

Blaming the victim

Seven Africans who were murdered in Italy were represented by the police (and some sections of the media) as engaged in criminal activities which made them partially culpable for their own deaths. In another case that took place in Italy, it would seem that the alleged crime that warrants the rendering of instant and fatal justice is that of stealing biscuits! But why would the Milanese owner of a shop and his son, take iron bars to a 19-year-old Italian teenager of African origin who posed no threat to them but had allegedly stolen some biscuits, unless they were motivated by the most crude and repellent racism? (In fact, their motivation was captured by the words used during the relentless assault, 'dirty Negro, we will kill you'.) Italian law provides for a higher sentence for violent assaults if the aggravating circumstance of racism can be proved. Yet the shop owner and his son were charged with voluntary homicide for futile motives and prime minister Berlusconi argued on a chat show that the killing was not racially motivated, but due to the fact that the teenager had been caught stealing biscuits. Several thousand people in Milan protested against this interpretation of events and there were disturbances in Cernusco, a Milan suburb with a significant black population.

There were also disturbances in Castelvoturno, Caserta, near Naples, after three Ghanaians, two Liberians and one man from the Togo, were mown down in a hail of bullets after the Neapolitan mafia armed with AK-47 rifles entered a tailor's shop where the immigrants had gathered and opened fire indiscriminately. Once again, the media were insensitive to migrant sensibilities about this horrific attack; they described the killings as the result of a war between Africans and the Camorra for the control of the drugs trade. Demonstrators carrying placards that read 'Against the Camorra and racism, say that those mowed down were not part of any African drugs mafia but were just 'poor people trying to get their daily bread'. Roberto Saviano, author of *Gomorra*, believes that as the local mafia were involved in a housing development project

in the area, the carnage may have been intended as a warning to black people to stay away from the area, in order to ensure a better return for their investments by keeping the new housing estates immigrant free.¹⁷ Even those who go down the 'drugs-war' line of thinking, such as justice ministry Antonio Laudati, acknowledge that the poor African migrants were killed 'in a symbolic manner. It was an ethnic warning to rebellious Africans.'¹⁸

Ethnicity, communalism and racism

The remaining case documented is related to the inter-racial tensions that can arise in very impoverished areas where groups live cheek by jowl. The Senegalese national, **Ousman Kote**, who was killed after trying to stop a fight between Gypsies and Africans in the Spanish seaside resort of Roquetas de Mar, seems to have fallen victim to inter-ethnic tensions that had not been resolved.¹⁹ In classifying his death as a killing with a racial element, we are not arguing that any fight or dispute between gangs of different ethnicities, or different skin colours, is *ipso facto* racist. But when tensions spill over into indiscriminate violence against anyone who just happens to have a different skin colour or ethnicity than it should be seen as part and parcel of the culture of racism and intolerance that blights all of our lives.

Footnotes

1 See 'Extreme-Right violence – what is to be done?', IRR *European Race Bulletin*, no. 35.

2 One such victim was Jeremiah Duggan, a 22-year-old London born Jewish student, who was found dead on a dual carriageway in Wiesbaden, Germany, five years ago, shortly after unwittingly attending a meeting organised by the extreme-Right Schiller Institute. He had phoned his mother hours before he died saying 'Mum, I am in deep trouble'. The family of Jeremiah Duggan are still trying to unearth the truth about his death. The family want a new inquest and have issued a legal challenge in the British courts. The original inquest took place in the UK in 2003 and the coroner in charge of the initial proceedings, Dr Bill Dolman, accepted the findings of the German police that Duggan had been killed on the road by two cars, although he acknowledged inadequacies in the German investigation and found that Duggan had died 'in a state of terror'. To get a second inquest, the family must have the support of the attorney general who has said that she does not believe it 'necessary or desirable in the interest of justice that another inquest should be held'. Government lawyers say that the attorney general's decision is final and cannot be subject to judicial review. The High Court has allowed the family's challenge to proceed. See *Guardian*, 10 November 2008

3 According to an interior ministry statement to congress in November 2007, there were 251 xenophobic and far-Right groups operational in Spain. Elperiodico.com, 21 November 2007.

4 El Pais.com, 18 April 2008.

5 Elperiodico.com, 21 November 2007, *El Pais* 6, 10 September 2008, Statement of Voice Refugee Forum.

6 In the latest shocking incident, Navtej Singh Sidhu, a 35-year-old homeless Indian construction worker, suffered forty per cent burns after being set alight and beaten by youths, fuelled by drugs and alcohol, in the coastal town of Nettuno, 70km south of Rome. The arrested youths have denied the attack was racially motivated, but Italy's president Giorgio Napolitano condemned the attack, and growing racism and xenophobia. See *The Times of India*, 4 February 2008.

7 In 2007, the killer of a 24-year-old Malinese woman, Oulemata Niangadou, who worked as an au pair, and the two year old Belgium girl she was caring for, became the first person to be found guilty of the newly-created offence of racially motivated murder. The family of Mrs Niangadou have been denied compensation from the national victims compensation scheme on the grounds that the dead woman had overstayed her visa and only foreigners lawfully resident in the country are entitled to compensation. See *Migration News Sheet*, January 2009.

8 As cited in IRR *European Race Bulletin*, no. 57.

9 *Reuters*, 19 November 2008.

10 The municipal court in Budapest dissolved the Hungarian Guard at the end of December 2008 on the grounds that its activities violated the laws of association and threatened minorities. But as the Guard has launched an appeal, the law has not yet taken effect. See <www.romea.cz> 'Slovak PM praises abolition of Hungarian guard', 18 December 2008.

11 In another case, the New Donski asylum in the Oslo suburb of Baerum was vandalised and sprayed with racist graffiti even before it opened over a weekend in October 2008. One slogan read 'The next shots will land here'. See *Aftenposten*, 13 October 2008.

12 Subsequently, the family of the dead man suffered further racial harassment and seven teenagers linked to the killing but not prosecuted were given interim anti-social behaviour orders and banned from causing racial harass-

ment, alarm or distress across Liverpool.

13 The UK Crime & Disorder Act 1998 requires the court to consider racial motivation or racial hostility as aggravating factors when deciding on the sentence for any offence which is not specific racially aggravated offence under the Act. If a court decides an offence is racially aggravated then this should increase the seriousness of the offence and should be taken into account when sentencing.

14 There is also a strong element to suggest that the stabbing to death of 'Salih' in Cologne had a racial element. Certainly, the hundreds of youth who took to the streets following Salih's death for several nights thought so. Salih was stabbed to death in Cologne following a very ugly election campaign by the Christian Democrats (CDU) who targeted 'foreign criminals'. His assailant was a 20-year-old German youth whom the police declared, just eight hours after the attack, would not be prosecuted as he acted in self-defence to prevent a mugging. Young people took to the streets to protest the killing argued that it was the demonisation of them as criminals and foreigners which justified the police's downgrading of the murder to a necessary act of self-defence and to suggest that it is appropriate to stab someone to death for a minor street attack.

15 Shortly after the killings, the Irish minister of foreign affairs had stated that he feared the attack, which brings 'shame to us all', was racially motivated.

16 The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, which was forced to close in December 2008 when the government cut its funding, had called on the police to improve reporting mechanisms and called on officials to provide comprehensive data on racially motivated crimes.

17 As cited in *Searchlight*, November 2008.

18 As cited in *The Los Angeles Times*, 7 January 2009, which suggested that on the day of the murders, the Cammora were looking for a Nigerian drug dealer whom they believed had run into the tailor's shop where the immigrants were gathered. When they could not find him, they decided to take indiscriminate revenge on any African who had the misfortune to be in the shop.

19 The Guinea-Bissau Youth Association, which took up the case certainly saw it as a racially-motivated murder and there were serious disturbances following the killing during which at least ten Africans were arrested.

Appendix A

A list of 53 asylum- and immigration-related deaths

Key

D = Deportation-related death

S = Suicide

MN – Medical neglect

P = Police-related death

For all source references to UNITED, see UNITED *List of 11105 documented refugee deaths through Fortress Europe*, <http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/pdfs/actual_listofdeath.pdf>

For all source references to Anti-Racist Initiative Berlin see ARI - *German asylum policy and its deadly consequences (1993 to 2007)*, <http://www.ari-berlin.org/PE_english_15.pdf>

BELGIUM

1 May 2008

Ebenezer Folefack Sontsa, a 32-year old asylum seeker from the Cameroons, killed himself at the Merksplas detention centre. Sontsa had been placed in isolation following a failed deportation attempt, and used bed-sheets to hang himself in a bathroom. (S)

Source: The Voice Refugee Forum website, 4 May 2008; *Migration News Sheet*, June 2008, p19.

12 October 2008

A young man of Serbian nationality committed suicide in the Vottem detention centre after hearing that his asylum claim had been rejected. A request to be transferred to another section of the centre had been refused. (S)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, November 2008, p27.

CYPRUS

16 November 2007

A migrant (name and nationality unknown) died after being shot in the stomach following a scuffle between four suspected irregular migrants and the police in the village of Pyla, on Cyprus's southern coastline. (P)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, December 2007, p27.

May 2008

A Syrian migrant died after being hit by a car in Nicosia after attempting to escape an immigration swoop by running across a motorway. Another migrant was seriously injured. (P)

Source: *Agence France Presse*, 28 May 2008.

FRANCE

16 April 2007

An autopsy concluded that a two-month-old Chinese baby girl who stopped breathing during an immigration swoop in Aubervilliers, a suburb of northeastern Paris, died of sudden infant death syndrome. (P)

Source: Press releases, Réseau Education sans Frontières (Paris), Comité de Vigilance (Aubervilliers), 18 April 2007, *Libération*, 21 April 2007.

9 June 2007

The body of Moulay Mohammed, a 27-year-old Moroccan irregular migrant, was found hanging in a shower of a remand centre located in the basement of the police station of the city of Bordeaux. He had been arrested and issued with an expulsion order at the end of May. (S)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, July 2007, p28; UNITED *List of 11105 documented refugee deaths through Fortress Europe*.

24 September 2007

Chulun Liua, a 51-year-old Chinese woman, was left in a coma from which she eventually died after throwing herself out of a window to avoid a police raid in Paris. (P)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, February 2008, BBC News Online, 24 April 2008.

15 February 2008

John Maina, a 19-year old rejected asylum seeker from Kenya who came to France in 2006, committed suicide in Meudon, a western suburb of Paris. (S)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, March 2008 p27, L'Humanité in English, 27 February 2008.

4 April 2008

A 29-year-old Malian migrant died of a heart attack after jumping into the river Marne in a Paris suburb in an attempt to flee a police identity check. (P)

Source: *Le Monde*, 7 April 2008.

21 June 2008

Belkacem Souli, a 41-year-old Tunisian, died of a heart attack in the Vincennes detention centre, Val-de-Marne. Fellow detainees alleged that calls for emergency assistance were ignored for over two hours. (MN)

Source: MRAP Communication, 23 June 2008, World Socialist website, 28 June 2008.

GERMANY

17 March 2007

Marin Mogos, a 57-year-old stateless Roma, hanged himself in the transit area of Bucharest airport, where he had lived alongside his wife and two children since his deportation from Germany in 2002. (S)

Source: World Socialist website 11 April 2007, *Jungle World*, 28 March 2007.

11 April 2007

A 34-year-old refugee (name and nationality not known) killed himself in a refugee camp in Lotte, North Rhine-Westphalia. (S)

Source: Anti-Racist Initiative, Berlin.

7 June 2007

Sherry Alex, 24, died from malaria following her deportation to Luanda, Angola. (D/MN)

Source: Anti-Racist Initiative, Berlin.

27 June 2007

Mustafa Alcali, 30, Turkish Kurd, hanged himself in deportation custody in Frankfurt on the Main. (S)

Source: Anti-Racist Initiative, Berlin.

13 August 2007

Amru Aljiti, 63, died four weeks after his deportation to Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina. He was critically ill at the time of his deportation and died due to lack of insulin. (D/MN)

Source: Anti-Racist Initiative, Berlin.

29 August 2007

Soran Ali Korshid, a 35-year-old disabled Iraqi asylum seeker, died after taking an overdose in an asylum seekers' hostel in Rostock. (S)

Source: Statement of Anti-Racist Initiative, Rostock, 4 September 2007.

11 December 2007

Kamal X, a 28-year-old Iranian, died after pouring petrol over himself and setting himself on fire in Amberg. (S)

Source: Anti-Racist Initiative, Berlin.

30 December 2007

Mohamed Mechergui, a 28-year-old rejected asylum-seeker from Tunisia, awaiting deportation after being arrested for theft, hanged himself with his shoe laces in the Berlin-Köpenick detention centre. (S)

Source: Anti-Racist Initiative, Berlin.

1 January 2008

An unnamed 28-year-old rejected Tunisian asylum seeker awaiting deportation in the Berlin-Grünau detention centre died after attempting suicide two days earlier. (S)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, January 2008, p. 28, *Jungle World*, 10 January 2008.

October 2008

A 40-year-old Vietnamese man awaiting deportation hanged himself in a detention centre in Bautzen. (S)

Source: Anti-Racist Initiative, Berlin.

GREECE

20 August 2007

Tony Onuoha, a 25-year-old Nigerian migrant legally resident in Greece, died from serious head injuries after falling from a first floor café balcony in the seaside Kalamaria suburb of the northern port city of Thessaloniki following police identity checks and pursuit. (P)

Source: *Earth Times*, 22 August 2007, *Reuters*, 21, 22 August 2007, see also <http://shortstorymadelong.wordpress.com/2007/08/25/tony-onuoha-dying-in-the-postmodern-age/>

November 2007

An Albanian migrant without papers died after being shot in the back by border guards who chased him as he attempted to enter the northern Greek area of Florina irregularly. (P)

Source: *Migration News Sheet* December 2007.

26 October 2008

A 29-year-old Pakistani migrant, pursued by police who had earlier clashed with asylum seekers queuing at the Aliens Board in Votanikos, near Central Athens, died in as yet unexplained circumstances. Police claim that he accidentally fell into a riverbed. (P)

Source: BBC News Online, 26 October 2008.

IRELAND

6 January 2007

Brenda Kwesikazi Mohammed, a 27-year-old South African making a joint claim for asylum with her Nigerian husband and 2-year-old child, died of malnutrition in a Galway asylum hostel after her weight plummeted from 14 to 6 stone during a year in which she also suffered depression. Gardai launched an investigation into the death on behalf of the Galway West coroner. (S/MN)

Source: *Irish Independent*, 27 January 2007; *Galway Independent*, 24, 31 January 2007.

ITALY

15 January 2007

An unnamed 23-year-old Nigerian migrant hanged himself in the detention centre at Modena. (S)
Source: UNITED *List of 11105 documented refugee deaths through Fortress Europe*.

17 January 2007

An inmate at a detention centre for migrants in Modena hanged himself in the garden of the detention centre. His name is unknown but it is known that he originated from the Maghreb. (S)
Source: UNITED *List of 11105 documented refugee deaths through Fortress Europe*.

24 May 2008

Hassan Fathji (also referred to in some newspaper articles as Hassan Nejl), a Tunisian migrant suffering from acute pneumonia and allegedly being treated for drug addiction, died in a cell in the Brunelleschi CPT (identification and expulsion centre) in Turin run by the Red Cross, in circumstances that remain unclear. Fellow detainees claim that the man was denied proper medical care. (MN)
Source: *Migration News Sheet*, July 2008, p10, *Migration News Sheet*, June 2008, p12; Statement by Associazione per gli studi giuridici sull'immigrazione, website of Progetto Melting Pot Europa, <<http://www.meltingpot.org/>>

NETHERLANDS

4 October 2007

Mike Osey, a 34-year-old Ghanaian migrant, died during an immigration raid after falling from the balcony of a seventh floor flat in 'the Bijlmer' in Amsterdam, apparently after a struggle. (P)
Source: Communication from Africa Roots Movement, Amsterdam.

7 December 2007

An asylum seeker, whose name and nationality are unknown, died after setting himself on fire outside the town hall in the village of Haren, Groningen. (S)
Source: Dutchnews.nl, 6 December 2007.

2/3 February 2008

Algerian Rachid Abdelsalam died of heart failure on an immigration detention boat in Rotterdam. There are allegations that he was denied adequate health care, that his heart condition was treated with cough mixture and that guards ignored pleas for emergency help. (MN)
Source: Statewatch News Online, 8 March 2008.

March 2008

Ahmad Mahmud El Sabah, an Egyptian asylum-seeker suffering from diabetes and infection of the liver, died on an immigration detention boat in Rotterdam. There were allegations that he was denied emergency care. (MN)
Source: Statewatch News Online, 8 March 2008.

29 June 2008

Vera Filantova, a 47-year old stateless asylum seeker from Kyrgyzstan, committed suicide shortly after being released from detention where she had been held for seven months. She had been told to leave the country within 72 hours. (S)
Source: UNITED *List of 11105 documented refugee deaths through Fortress Europe*.

SPAIN

9 June 2007

An autopsy report stated that Osamuyi Aikpitanhi, a 23-year-old Nigerian deportee, died 'a violent death from asphyxiation, suffocation and lack of oxygen' during a deportation flight from Madrid to Lagos. He was gagged with tape and had his feet and hands tied. (D)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, July 2007, p13, Statewatch News Online, 6 September 2007, *Statewatch*, July 2007, website of The Nigerian Village Square, *El Pais*, 20 August 2007.

September 2007

Police were accused of sabotaging an inflatable dinghy, resulting in the death of Lauling Sonko, a 29 year old migrant, who drowned attempting to reach Ceuta. The Public Prosecutor's Office launched an inquiry into the allegations in April 2008 and three police officers were placed under investigation. (P)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, April 2008, p8, p19.

19 September 2007

An unnamed Romanian migrant worker aged 44 died of injuries inflicted fifteen days earlier when he set himself on fire outside the offices of the prefect in Castellón, near Valencia. (S)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, October 2007, p7; *Associated Press*, 4 September 2008.

SWEDEN

February 2007

Blekinge Hospital, Karlskrona, southern Sweden was reprimanded by Sweden's National Board of Health and Welfare for the wrong and fatal diagnosis of a 25-year-old asylum seeker who died from a large cerebral haemorrhage. (MN)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, August 2008, p18, *The Local*, 27 June 2008.

July 2007

Mewan Omer, an Iraqi Kurdish refugee, hanged himself in Olivia, Valhalbat, Sweden, after receiving a letter threatening him with deportation. His body was found four days after he went missing. (S)

Source: Press release, International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, 2 July 2007.

May 2008

A rejected 25-year-old Libyan asylum seeker died after he was arrested in Libya following his deportation from Sweden. There were allegations that he had been tortured. (D)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, June 2008, p15, *Dagens Nyheter*, 16 August 2008, *Aftonbladet*, 18, 19 June 2008.

SWITZERLAND

25 August 2007

A 25-year-old woman from Guinea, who did not have papers, fell to her death after attempting to pass from one balcony to another, apparently in an attempt to avoid the police who rang her doorbell at 3am. (P)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, October 2007.

March 2008

Abdi Daub, a 40 year old Somalian, died of tuberculosis at the detention centre at Kloten airport. The campaigning organisation Augenauf blamed his death on inferior quality of health care for asylum seekers since a new law was introduced three months previously, and said that he was given insufficient medication to counter the disease. (MN)

Source: *Bulletin Solidarité sans Frontières*, no. 3, September 2008.

30 May 2008

On 30 May, Andy Bestman, a 24-year-old failed Nigerian asylum seeker, drowned after jumping into the river attempting to flee a police identity check in Basel. There are allegations that no attempts were made to

rescue him and that information about what had happened was withheld for a week. (P)

Source: *African News Switzerland*, 19, 23 July 2008.

UNITED KINGDOM

January 2007

Imran Yousaf, a 28-year-old doctor from India, hanged himself in Bedford. He had become depressed after the government changed the immigration rules and told him he could not continue to work in the UK. (S)

Source: *Stoke Sentinel*, 1 November 2007.

18 March 2007

Uddhav Bhandari, a 40-year-old asylum seeker from Nepal, died eleven days after setting himself on fire at the offices of the asylum and immigration tribunal in Glasgow. (S)

Source: *The Scotsman*, 19 March 2007.

19 May 2007

Conrad Dixon, a 40-year-old Jamaican asylum seeker, died after setting himself alight and suffering nearly 100 per cent burns after his claim for asylum was refused. The Stoke-on-Trent coroner returned a verdict of suicide. (S)

Source: *Stoke Sentinel*, 1 November 2007.

6 September 2007

Solyman Rashed, an Iraqi asylum seeker, was killed by a car bomb in Kirkuk two weeks after his deportation from the UK, where he had spent long periods in detention as well as periods of destitution on the streets. (D)

Source: *IRR News*, 27 September 2007.

10 October 2007

Shaukat Ali, a 61-year-old Pakistani asylum seeker, was found hanged at the flat where he was staying in Huddersfield, after being told his asylum claim had failed. (S)

Source: *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 13 March 2008.

February 2008

Mohammed Ahmedi, an Iraqi asylum seeker with a heart condition, died in Gloucester Royal Hospital. His family and lawyer expressed concerns that he was not treated adequately because doctors and social workers were attempting to clarify his immigration status. (MN)

Source: *Guardian*, 13 February 2008.

30 March 2008

Ama Sumani, a 39-year-old Ghanaian without papers suffering from malignant myeloma, died following deportation to Ghana in January 2008. Medical professionals had warned that if deported she was likely to die as she was receiving dialysis and other vital drugs in the UK. (D)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, April 2008, p5, *Migration News Sheet*, February 2008, p5.

May 2008

Friends of Lucy Kirma, an African asylum seeker living in Birmingham, say she starved herself to death after receiving a refusal letter on her claim. She had lived in the UK for ten years. (S)

Source: *Birmingham Mail*, 16 May 2008.

5 August 2008

Nadir Zarabee, an Iranian asylum seeker, was found hanged in a park in Longsight, Manchester. He had recently been told to leave his home by the company contracted by the government to provide housing for asylum seekers. (S)

Source: *IRR News*, 4 August 2008.

10 August 2008

Hussein Ali, 35, shot himself in the cellar of his home in Sulaimanya, in Kurdish-controlled Iraq, two days after being deported from the UK. (D/S)

Source: *IRR News*, 4 August 2008; press release of International Federation of Iraqi Refugees.

2 September 2008

Frank Odame, a 36-year-old Ghanaian man, died of head and chest injuries following a fatal fall from a block of flats during a dawn raid by police and immigration raid in Woodford Green, Essex. (P)

Source: *IRR News*, 9 September 2008.

2 November 2008

Mohamed Ali, an 80-year-old Iraqi, died of lung cancer in London amidst allegations that he had suffered undue stress since 2006 when NHS debt collectors pursued him for hospital bills, though he was lawfully resident in the UK and entitled to health care at the time. (MN)

Source: *The Times*, 8 December 2008.

Appendix B

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A list of 39 deaths related to racism, fascism and intolerance

BELGIUM

10 April 2007

Raphael Mensah, a 50-year-old man of Gabonese origin, died of a respiratory ailment which was most probably a consequence of an extreme-Right attack that occurred in Bruges in 2006 which left him in a coma for two months. (FR)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, May 2007, p18.

BULGARIA

20 August 2008

An unnamed 17-year-old Roma boy was beaten to death after a clash between Bulgarian and Roma teenagers in the western town of Samokov. Police deny any racial element. (RE)

Source: <www.romea.cz> 23 August 2007.

CZECH REPUBLIC

January 2008

Jan Kucera, an 18-year-old anti-fascist dies after being stabbed by a 20-year-old neo-nazi in Pilsen, a town 50km south-west of Prague. (FR)

Source: <www.antifa.cz/152-mz-domova-jan-kucera-another-victim-of-neo-nazis.html>

DENMARK

19 March 2008

Deniz Özgür Uzun, a 16 year old Danish paperboy of Turkish origin, died a day after being attacked by three youths armed with baseball bats in the Amager district on Copenhagen. Police deny any racial element

although friends say racist language used during attack. Judge describes the killing as 'an accident'. (RE)
Source: Correspondence with Islamic Human Rights Commission, 20 March 2008.

FRANCE

31 March/1 April 2007

Ibrahima Sylla, a 28-year-old Guinean man, beaten to death near the campus of Luminy, southern Marseilles. Many suspected a racial motive and there was a silent protest in his memory as well as anger over the lack of media interest in his death. No further information is available. (U)

Source: *Le Monde*, 7, 8 April 2007.

GERMANY

July 2007

The badly beaten body of a 59-year-old homeless man was discovered in the basement of hostel for the destitute in Blankenburg, Saxony-Anhalt. Two neo-nazis confessed the killing. (FR)

January 2008

Salih (full-name not known), an 18-year-old Moroccan youth, was stabbed to death by a German youth in the Cologne borough of Kalk. Police treat the killing as an act of self-defence and deny young people's claim that the killing was linked to the climate of hostility against young immigrants (RE).

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, February 2008, p.27.

12 July 2008

Bernd K, a 55-year-old man was kicked to death in Templin, Brandenburg. Two young neo-Nazis have been arrested and await trial. (FR)

Source: *Der Spiegel*, 15 August 2008.

6 August 2008

Cha Dong N, an undocumented Vietnamese cigarette-seller, was robbed and then stabbed to death in Berlin-Marzahn by a 35-year-old German man who had previously told friends that these 'Fijis' (a derogatory term for people from the Middle East) should leave and that if the authorities did not do something he would do take action. The killer stopped the Vietnamese man outside a supermarket and called the police saying loudly 'Are you going to deal with this or do I have to take care of this myself'. (RM)

Source: Amadeu Antonio Stiftung, 'Racist murders in Germany 2007-2008', <www.mut-gegen-rechte-gewalt.de/news/chronik-der-gewalt>

16 August 2008

Rick L, a 20-year-old art student, died after suffocating on his own blood following a brutal assault by a far-Right extremist in Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt. (FR)

Source: Spiegel Online, 9 February 2008.

24 August 2008

Body of Marcel W, 18, who was due to testify against a 19-year-old neo-Nazi, was found lying in a pool of blood in the town of Bernburg, Saxony-Anhalt. (FR)

Source: Spiegel Online, 9 February 2008.

14 November 2008

A 50-year-old homeless man died in Desslau-Rosslau, Saxony-Anhalt after being attacked by two drunken-men connected to the neo-nazi scene who hit him over the head and torso with a metal bin. (FR)

Source: Amadeu Antonio Stiftung, 'Racist murders in Germany 2007-2008', <www.mut-gegen-rechte-gewalt.de/news/chronik-der-gewalt>

28 December 2008

A 14-year-old mixed-race teenager, named only as Kevin, died some two years after a savage attack by a gang of neo-nazis who racially abused him and tortured him for over an hour leaving him with 34 injuries. Awaiting details of autopsy report. (PFR)

Source: *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 9 January 2009.

HUNGARY

3 November 2008

A Roma man and a woman, both in their 40s, died from gunshot wounds after two houses opposite one another were sprayed with bullets, shortly after petrol bombs were thrown at the houses in the village of Nagycsecs, in north-eastern Hungary, close to the Romanian border. A special taskforce was launched to establish whether the killings were racially motivated. (PFR)

Source: *MTI*, 3 November 2008, BBC News Online, 4 November 2008.

18 November 2008

A Roma man and a woman were killed and their two children suffered minor injuries after a grenade was thrown through a window of their house in Pecs, southern Hungary. Police were criticised by the national minorities ombudsman for claiming this as a 'revenge' attack and quickly ruling out racial motive. (PFR)

Source: *Reuters*, 19 November 2008, BBC News Online, 4 November 2008.

IRELAND

February 2008

Two Polish migrant workers, Marius Sz wajkos, 27, and Pawel Kalite, 26, died after being attacked and stabbed with screwdrivers by a group of Irish teenagers in the Drimnagh area of Dublin after they refused to buy them alcoholic drinks. The case was not treated as a racial incident. (RE)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, April 2008, p18; *IRR News*, 27 March 2008, Indymedia, <www.indymedia.ie/article/86485>

ITALY

1 May 2008

Nicola Tommasoli, 29 year old Italian man, was beaten to death in Verona by a gang connected to the far-Right scene after refusing to give them a cigarette. The Northern League mayor of Verona denied that the death was linked to the far-Right motive. (FR)

September 2008

Six labourers of African origin, aged between 24 and 34, were killed in a hail of bullets in a suspected mafia attack in Castelvoturnno, Caserta 35km northwest of Naples. Police treated the murders as part of a turf war over drugs. (RE).

Source: *Searchlight*, November 2008, *Times*, 23 September 2008, United Press International, 5 October 2008.

14 September 2008

Abdul Guibrea (also known by his nickname Abba) a 19-year-old Italian teenager originally from Burkino Faso, died after being beaten with iron bars by a shop owner and his son who shouted 'dirty Negro, we'll kill you'. Police and prime minister Silvio Berlusconi deny the killing was racially motivated. (RM)

Source *Statewatch*, vol. 13, no. 3, *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 October 2008.

NORWAY

18 July 2008

A sniper, taking aim from a nearby forest, fired shots at the Hvalstad reception centre for asylum-seeking children in Asker, south-west of Oslo killing a 16-year-old Somali boy. Police are investigating a far-right link. (PFR)

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, August 2008, p16, *Verdens Gang*, 5 August 2008 as in *UNHCR Baltic and Nordic Headlines*, VG, 23, 24 July 2008, *Searchlight*, October 2008.

23 August 2008

Mahmed Jamal Shirwac, a 46-year-old Somalian taxi-driver died after thirteen shots fired at his car on the outskirts of Trondheim. The police have amassed strong evidence that the murderer, who was a member of the Trondheim shooting community, was motivated by racism. (RM)

Source: *Searchlight*, November 2008, *Islam in Europe*, 20 December 2008.

SLOVAKIA

December 2007

An unnamed 14-year-old Romany boy died a week after being beaten over the head with an axe by a 17-year-old youth in Jasov, East Slovakia. Courts describe it as a racially-motivated crime. (RM)

Source: <www.romea.cz> 11 September 2008.

SPAIN

September 2007

Ousman Kote, a 28-year-old Senegalese national, trying to break up a dispute between Africans and Gypsies, died after being stabbed in the seaside city of Roquetas de Mar. (RE)

Source: Euronews, 7 September 2008.

11 November 2007

Carlos Javier Palomino Muoz, a 16-year-old teenager, died after being stabbed through the heart and chest with a hunting knife in a metro station Metro Station, Madrid by a neo-Nazi off duty soldier in the Spanish Army. (FR)

Source: *Heraldo de Aragon*, SA 2007, *Statewatch*, January-March 2008.

UNITED KINGDOM

March 2007

Enayit Khalili, an Afghan refugee, died after being stabbed in the stomach on the doorstep of his home in Oxford. The killer, who was described by his sister-in-law as a 'real psychopath' had previously threatened to 'kill that foreigner one day'. (RE)

Source: IRR List of Deaths with a racial element (known or suspected) 2000-2008, <www.irr.org.uk/2002/november/ak000008.html>

May 2007

Michael Moran, a 21 year-old man of 'mixed race', was stabbed to death in Garston, Liverpool. His family had been subjected to a campaign of harassment including racist abuse by a gang in the months up to his death. (RE)

Source: IRR List of Deaths.

19 May 2007

Tarsen Nahar, aged 44, known as a vulnerable street drinker, died after being attacked in the street by a gang

in Hayes, west London who stole his phone and wallet and were heard to say 'we don't like n*****s in our park'. Although the 17-year-old youth eventually found guilty of his murder was initially charged with racially aggravated ABH (as well as murder), the 'racially aggravated' charge was later dropped. (RE)

Source: IRR List of Deaths.

August 2007

Adam Michalski, a Polish migrant worker, was stabbed to death in Wrexham after suffering racist abuse. Judge at trial of man given life sentence for the murder said that he believed there was a racist element to the killing. (RE)

Source: IRR List of Deaths.

October 2007

Gregory Fernandes, a 32-year-old Indian seaman, whose boat was berthed at Fawley oil refinery in Hampshire, was beaten to death by a 20-strong gang. Police initially stated that they believed the killing was racially motivated but, to date, no-one has been prosecuted. (RE)

Source: IRR List of Deaths.

21 December 2007

Asaf Mohmood Ahmed, a 28-year-old father of three, died after suffering an asthma attack following an assault by two young white men who kicked and punched him to the ground before stamping on his head. Judge acknowledges that the murder was racially aggravated. (RE)

Source: IRR List of Deaths.

August 2008

Muhammad al-Maded, a 16-year-old Arab student from Qatar, studying English at a foreign language school in Hastings, died from serious head injuries after being set upon by a gang of drunken youths shouting racist abuse. Police have charged one man with racially aggravated common assault (RM)

Source: IRR List of Deaths.

Appendix C

A list of thirteen police-related deaths which occurred in 2007 and 2008. (Deaths related to the policing of immigration are covered separately in appendix A.)

FRANCE

17 June 2007

Lamine Dieng, aged 25, died shortly after arrest in the 20th arrondissement of Paris. The Police Complaints Board (IGS) carried out an investigation which concluded that Dieng suffered a cardiac arrest in the police van after resisting arrest. A judicial inquiry was opened on 10 July 2007. The family issued a press release stating that the public prosecutor told them in an informal conversation that the investigation was closed as the autopsy revealed cardiac arrest due to a drugs overdose.

The family of the dead man said they were only informed about his death by telephone, some 36 hours after the initial arrest, and that they were not allowed to see Lamine Dieng's body. Police stated that they could not establish his identity as he had no identity documents on him at the time of his death.

Source: *L'Echo des Cités, Journal du Mouvement de L'Immigration et des Banlieues*, October 2008. Ziare Djaouane blog, <<http://www.afrik.com/>>, 5 July 2007. Further information from [collectif-lamine dieng@hotmail.fr](mailto:collectif-lamine-dieng@hotmail.fr)

25 November 2007

Mouhsin Cehhouli, a 15-year-old French-Moroccan youth and Larami Samoura, a 16-year-old French-

Senegalese youth, died when their motorcycle crashed into a police car in Villiers-le-Bel, on the outskirts of Paris. The circumstances surrounding the deaths are hotly disputed and there were allegations that the police fled the scene and did not help the dying youths. Following the deaths, there were major disorders in Villiers-le-Bel and cities in the south including Toulouse.

Source: IRR *European Race Bulletin* no. 63.

9 May 2008

Abdelhakim Hadjimi, a 22-year-old man (known also as Hakim), died after police arrest in Grasse, Alpes-Maritimes. An official autopsy proved inconclusive. It ruled out actual blows as the cause of death but stated that analysis of the heart and lungs as well as toxicological examinations showed possible signs of asphyxiation or a possible heart condition. A judicial inquiry for involuntary manslaughter was opened by the prosecutor's office in Grasse.

Police had been called after Hakim had argued with the staff at his bank over their refusal to allow him to withdraw money from his account. Witnesses stated that the police attitude was violent and disproportionate and that the young man, who was handcuffed behind his back, had gone purple and was begging to breathe. Emergency services which had arrived on the scene to assist a police officer with a shoulder injury tried to intervene, but were pushed away by the police officers.

One day after the death, the local Prefect Dominique Vian issued a press release defending the police's conduct and stating that 'Nothing that took place would lead me to question the actions of the police'. The press release also provided specific details which presented the young man as a cannabis smoker, previously prosecuted for having driven while intoxicated, and stating that on occasions he had been confined at a psychiatric hospital.

One of the policemen involved in the arrest admitted to have used a 'half-nelson strangulation hold'. In 1998, the European Court of Human Rights, commenting on the death of Mohamed Saoud, a schizophrenic who had a violent crisis and died of cardiac arrest following police restraint, condemned France for using this method of immobilisation, banned in Switzerland and Denmark. The ECHR had 'deplored the fact that no specific directive was issued by the French authorities with respect to this type of immobilisation technique'.

Source *L'Echo des Cités*, October 2008; IRR *European Race Bulletin*, no. 64.

8 January 2008

Reda Semmoudi, died during a police search of his home in the Londeau quarter of Noisy-Le-Sec, Seine Saint Denis. The police state that during a search of his home he 'head-butted' an officer, and then fell attempting to escape through a window of his ninth floor flat. Later, police briefed the press, suggesting suicide as the cause of the death, even as an official investigation was ongoing. The family and a support group states that 'Reda was a father and he and his wife were expecting another child. He was loved by his family, his friends and his neighbours, he had never had a criminal conviction.'

A formal complaint was made against the police.

Source: *L'Echo des Cités*, October 2008. Contact: comitedesoutien.redasemoudi@gmail.com

29 May 2008

Joseph Guerdner, a 27-year-old Roma, was shot dead by a police officer in Draguignan, Provence, Alpes, Côte d'Azur in the South of France. Police alleged that Guerdner, who had repeatedly been arrested for thefts and break-ins and was under investigation for the abduction of a motorist, was attempted to escape from the police station in Draguignan when he was shot.

Source: LDH Toulon Article 2715, 31 May 2008.

GERMANY

February 2008

Adem Ozdamer, a 26-year-old Turkish man, died a week after suffering heart failure in police custody in the Westphalian town of Hagen. Ozdamer, who police alleged had taken cocaine, had called the police for help

only to be arrested and taken to the police station where he had to be resuscitated when it was discovered that his heart had stopped. It seems that he was lying face down on a stretcher, his feet and hands bound with plastic cable ties which had cut into his skin when his heart stopped. He went into a coma and died a week later.

Source: Amadeu Antonio Stiftung.

NETHERLANDS

October 2007

Police shot dead a 22-year-old mentally unstable man of Moroccan origin after he had stabbed and injured two policemen in Amsterdam. There were at least six consecutive nights of rioting in one Amsterdam neighbourhood following the death. It was said that the dead man was undergoing treatment for psychiatric problems and had been interrogated in the past for ties with Islamic extremists involved in the murder of Theo van Gogh.

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, November 2007, p25.

SPAIN

June 2007

Visvaldas Felmanis, a 26-year-old Lithuanian man, was shot dead by a police officer in Ceutí, Murcia. A police officer was placed under investigation for 'reckless homicide'.

Source: *Diario La Verdad*, 3, 4 July 2007.

18 June 2007

According to police, a 30-year-old Romanian man died after attempting to escape police by jumping from the stairway of a police station following his arrest for credit card offences.

Source: *Migration News Sheet*, July 2007, p28.

UNITED KINGDOM

3 July 2008

Habib Ullah, a 39-year-old Asian man died in hospital shortly after his arrest in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. The police's statement that he became ill during a police search on his car is disputed by his family who allege that six police officers struggled with Habib Ullah for up to thirty minutes before he died. The family also say the police failed to inform them about the death and they only learnt about it 'through the grapevine'.

Source: *IRR News*, 10 July 2008.

21 August 2008

Sean Rigg, a 40-year-old Afro-Caribbean man, died in Brixton police station in, as yet, unexplained circumstances. He was arrested on suspicion of public order offences and an alleged assault on a police officer. While in Brixton police station, he became ill and had to be given cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. He was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital.

Source: *IRR News*, 4 September 2008, quoting Independent Police Complaints Commission.

August/September 2008

Reece Robinson-Webber, 14, died in West Norwood, south London. The black school student died after falling from his moped after allegedly failing to stop for police.

Source: *IRR News*, 4 September 2008.

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