

Press release

Armenia

Second anniversary of Levon Gulyan's death in police custody

Erevan – Paris, May 12, 2009 - May 12 will mark the second anniversary of Levon Gulyan's tragic death (see <http://www.levon-gulyan.info/>, and "Armenia: Witness to a shooting dies in custody", <http://www.fidh.org/Armenia-Witness-to-a-shooting-dies>). On May 12, 2007, Mr. Gulyan was taken to the Police Headquarters of the Republic of Armenia to serve as a witness in a murder that took place in the vicinity of his workplace. A few hours later, his family was informed of his death. Police officers have given different versions as to the circumstances of his death: some stated that he died after jumping from the 3rd floor window, trying to escape, while according to others he committed suicide. The family of Mr. Gulyan believes that he died as a result of beating and torture.

On April 16, 2009 the Special Investigatory Service of the Republic of Armenia has officially terminated the investigation into the death of Levon Gulyan's, concluding to "lack of evidence" that a crime was committed. No official has been held accountable for his death in an Armenian police station.

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member organisation in Armenia, the Civil Society Institute (CSI) express their deep concern about the fact that an Armenian citizen died in a Police station and that people responsible for his death have not been identified nor brought to justice for the last two years. Our organisations fear that this situation will feed the public's general mistrust of the judiciary and of the institutions that aim at protecting and guaranteeing human rights, and in particular mistrust among the population towards the Armenian police.

Our organisations remind the state that it has the obligation to conduct a full, independent and impartial investigation, to ascertain the facts and, if relevant, to bring those responsible to justice. We call again upon the Armenian authorities to fully conform with the provisions of the European Convention on the Prevention of Torture and the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. These Conventions impose an obligation to investigate and prosecute allegations of torture.

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