

# Unwanted, Unnoticed: an audit of 160 asylum and immigration-related deaths in Europe

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## PREFACE

As part of its project 'Taking A Stand for Human Dignity', the IRR's European Research Programme (ERP) has undertaken the difficult task of documenting the deaths of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants living in legal limbo inside Europe's borders. Many organisations, and even the Pope, have berated Europe's leaders for policy failures, and a moral attitude of indifference and inertia, which have contributed to the situation where thousands of refugees are drowning each year in the Mediterranean Sea. But it is also the case that many migrants and refugees who survive these perilous journeys and reach Europe then find themselves living on the margin and dying prematurely and unnecessarily in distressing circumstances that are barely reported. These deaths are met with an official indifference which is on a continuum with the moral inertia behind border deaths.

But then, poor and vulnerable people across Europe, irrespective of nationality, are increasingly ignored by the affluent and the powerful. They are, to all intents and purposes, Europe's non-people - 'unwanted, unvalued and unnoticed'.<sup>1</sup>

When the structures created by asylum and immigration systems are added to this mix, societal indifference is entrenched still further. Because migrants who suffer inside Europe are denied access to welfare, entombed within detention centres or forced into a sub-subsistence life at the very margins of society, their deaths are *unmournable*, or, to use a phrase that one would have hoped would be obsolete, '*Life unworthy of life*' (*Lebensunwertes Leben*). But their suffering and their deaths do need to be accounted for.

Our list, which relies on newspapers and NGO

reports, is by no means a complete picture of all the deaths that have taken place in recent years. Our findings are indicative rather than exhaustive. Over fifty nationalities are covered by the 160 deaths we have listed, though sub-Saharan Africans and those from the Middle East and North Africa are dominant. Precariousness - of status, of rights, of life's essentials - has consequences in terms of mortality rates. There is an epidemic of suicide attempts amongst those with unresolved refugee status or without papers.

After Mohammad Rahsepar, a 29-year-old Iranian torture survivor, committed suicide at an asylum camp in Germany, his friends issued a simple statement, saying he 'hanged himself from the window with his bed sheets and ended his struggle to find a way to be able to live with dignity in a human society'. His friends at the Würzburg asylum centre understood his pain. It is time for us to stand alongside them, addressing the linked issues of precarity and the absence of human dignity.

**Liz Fekete**  
**Director**

## Notes

1. The phrase was used in an open letter by the Church of England bishops urging congregations to vote, and accusing politicians of celebrating equality while treating the poor and vulnerable as 'unwanted, unvalued and unnoticed'. *Guardian* (17 February 2015), available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/17/church-of-england-calls-for-fresh-moral-vision-in-british-politics>

\* Front page shows migrant squat in a derelict former factory in Dijon, France (© Joseph Tanner/ UNHCR)

## INTRODUCTION

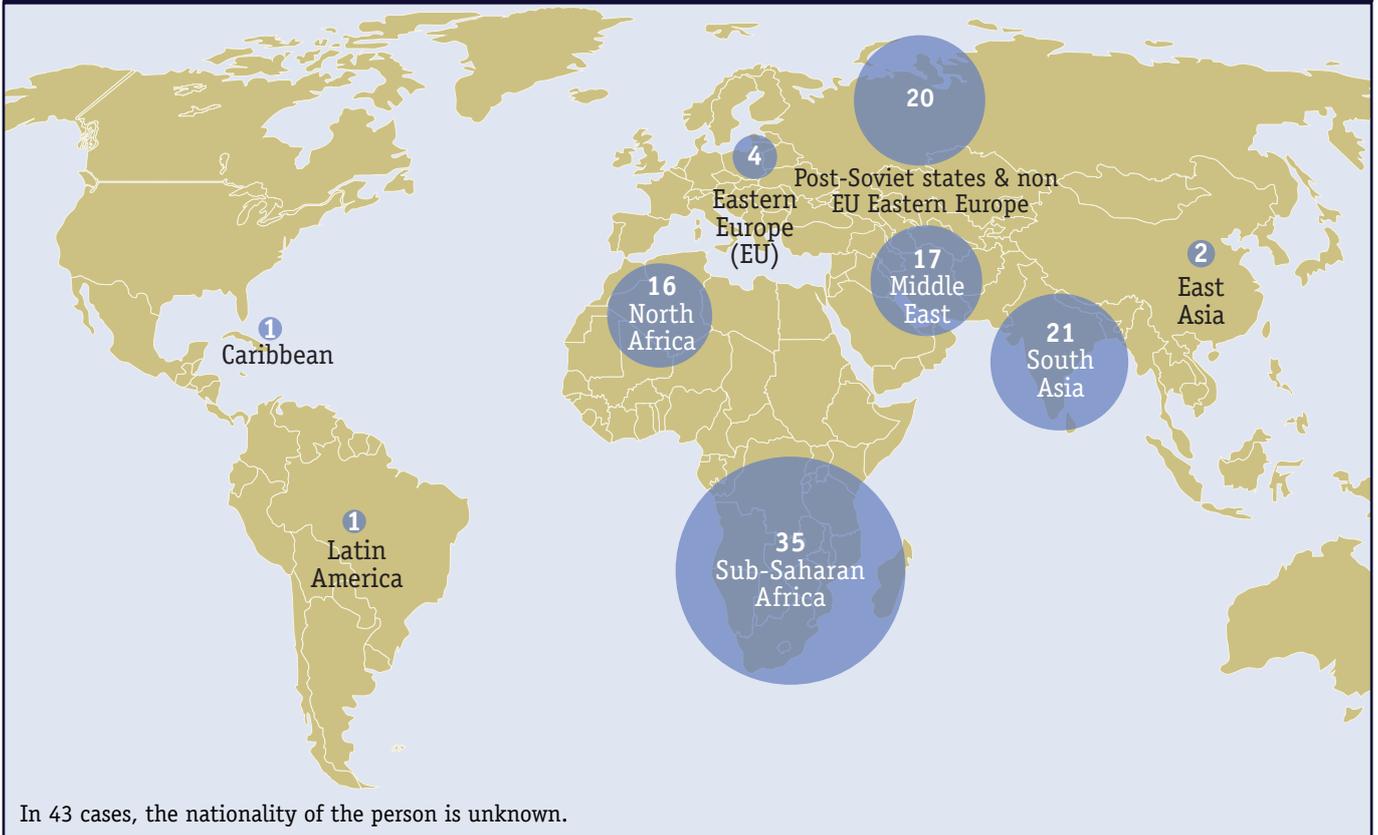
This briefing paper highlights the role European governments' immigration policies and practices have played in the 160 immigration and asylum-related deaths we have identified within EU member states between January 2010 and December 2014.

In the deaths of migrants and refugees that the ERP has documented over this period – primarily through local media reports and communication with local migrant and anti-racist support groups – the circumstances vary, but increasingly, trends and commonalities have emerged. In freezing, damp, squalid or overcrowded reception centres, asylum seekers die of preventable but untreated disease. Undocumented migrants forced to live with no home, livelihood or security die lighting fires to keep warm on the streets or derelict buildings where they subsist. Asylum seekers forced to live in camps die crossing unsafe railway tracks to get to shops. Undocumented migrants

die jumping or falling as they flee pursuing police. They die of dangerous restraints applied to shut them up and force them down during deportation, or of punishment beatings by guards. They die at the hands of cellmates with untreated psychoses. Sometimes they die in violent encounters with police. But most of all, they die at their own hand, of despair.

The deaths we are aware of are by no means the whole story. The relatively large number of deaths recorded here in Germany, for example, is more likely to be a result of an active anti-racist and migrant sector which obtains and publicises information from the accommodation centres and asylum hostels, rather than an indication that Germany is the deadliest country for migrants and asylum seekers. Similarly, the large number of deaths recorded in the UK is not just the result of relative ease of access to UK press reports and campaign groups, but is also a product of the inquest

**Table 1: Regions of origin of migrants and asylum seekers who died in Europe or after deportation**



system, and of the systematic investigation of all deaths in prisons and immigration removal centres (IRCs) by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman’s office (PPO), which publishes reports on its website. (What limited accountability there is is a product of the persistent campaigning over decades by families of those dying in custody.) In some countries, such as Norway and Ireland, official statistics are kept, but no details are revealed as to why or how people died, and trying to find out is well-nigh impossible even for the tenacious Irish parliamentarians and refugee support organisations which have tried. In other countries, such as Hungary, Greece or Bulgaria, there appear to be no official records, and with no infrastructure for official accountability, no systematic monitoring and chaotic reception conditions, the deaths we have found out about are likely to be a fraction of the total.

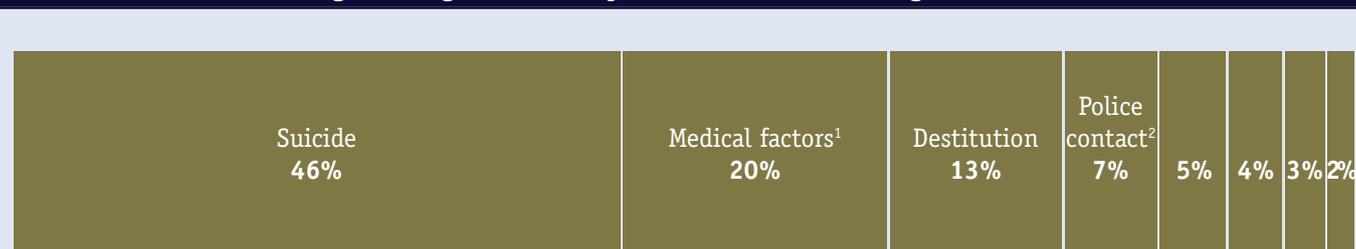
So the deaths we document here are no more than a snapshot, an indicative fragment of a larger picture of institutional indifference and negligence, of inhuman deterrent policies such as lengthy detention or consignment to a limbo of enforced dependence and destitution, where work is forbidden and life is suspended in waiting.

Of the deaths we have recorded, 123 died as a **consequence – direct or indirect – of the immigration/ asylum system** – by taking their own lives due to stress placed on them by the asylum system or prior to deportation, by medical neglect in detention, by force, or by meeting accidental deaths through dangerous living conditions, homelessness or destitution.

Of these:

- **60 committed suicide**<sup>1</sup>. In some cases, it seems to have been the fear of deportation that triggered suicide, hours or days before a scheduled removal. In other cases, detention or the deadly slow asylum process compounded mental health issues, often left untreated, driving asylum seekers to kill themselves, in detention or out of it.
- 26 died – in Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain and the UK – as a result of illness, which was either **left untreated**, with **medical assistance denied** or **severely delayed**, or **inadequately or inappropriately treated**, or caused or exacerbated by **conditions** in detention, accommodation and reception centres, or by the threat of deportation.

**Table 2: Factors contributing to immigration and asylum-related deaths of migrants**



Total (deaths by known causes) = 128

Accidental Non-police Through Post-  
homicide escape<sup>3</sup> deportation

1 'Medical factors' refers to deaths resulting from untreated illness, with medical assistance denied or severely delayed, or inadequately or inappropriately treated. It also includes deaths resulting from medical issues caused or exacerbated by conditions in detention, accommodation and reception centres, or by the threat of deportation.

2 'Police contact' refers to deaths following direct contact with police or security officials, both privatised and state-employed. These deaths occurred within detention centres, police stations, during deportation, in homes or on the street, and were the result of beatings, restraint or shooting.

3 'Through escape' refers to deaths during police chases or immigration raids, in accidents, or those afraid of being arrested who have thrown themselves from high-storey buildings.

- 16 died as a result of **destitution** – eight in France, four in Greece, three in Spain and one in Ireland – either through accidents or illness caused by having to live on the streets or in derelict buildings.
- 9 died<sup>2</sup> after **direct contact with police or security officials**, both privatised and state-employed. These deaths occurred within detention centres, police stations, during deportation, in homes or on the street, and were the result of beatings, restraint or shooting.
- 4 died during **police chases or immigration raids**, in accidents, or, afraid of being arrested, by throwing themselves from high-storey buildings.
- 4 (including a ten-year-old child) died, all in Germany, because of the dangerous location of accommodation camps and authorities' refusal to mitigate the dangers. They were all **hit by trains** on railway tracks they were forced to cross to get to shops, and safety measures to protect camp residents were consistently refused. There were two accidental deaths in Norwegian reception centres, about which we have no further information.
- 2 were killed by **violent room- or cell-mates**, whose psychological problems were untreated, ignored or punished (one in Germany, one in Switzerland). There were three more deaths by homicide (all in reception centres in Norway) about which we have no further information.
- 2 died violently in their country of origin **after their deportation** following refusal of asylum (from Belgium and Ireland).

Some tentative observations can be made from these cases. We can say, for example, that in northern Europe – Germany, the UK, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Norway, more people died at their own hands than from any other single cause. This may be linked with the highly regulated and bureaucratised asylum

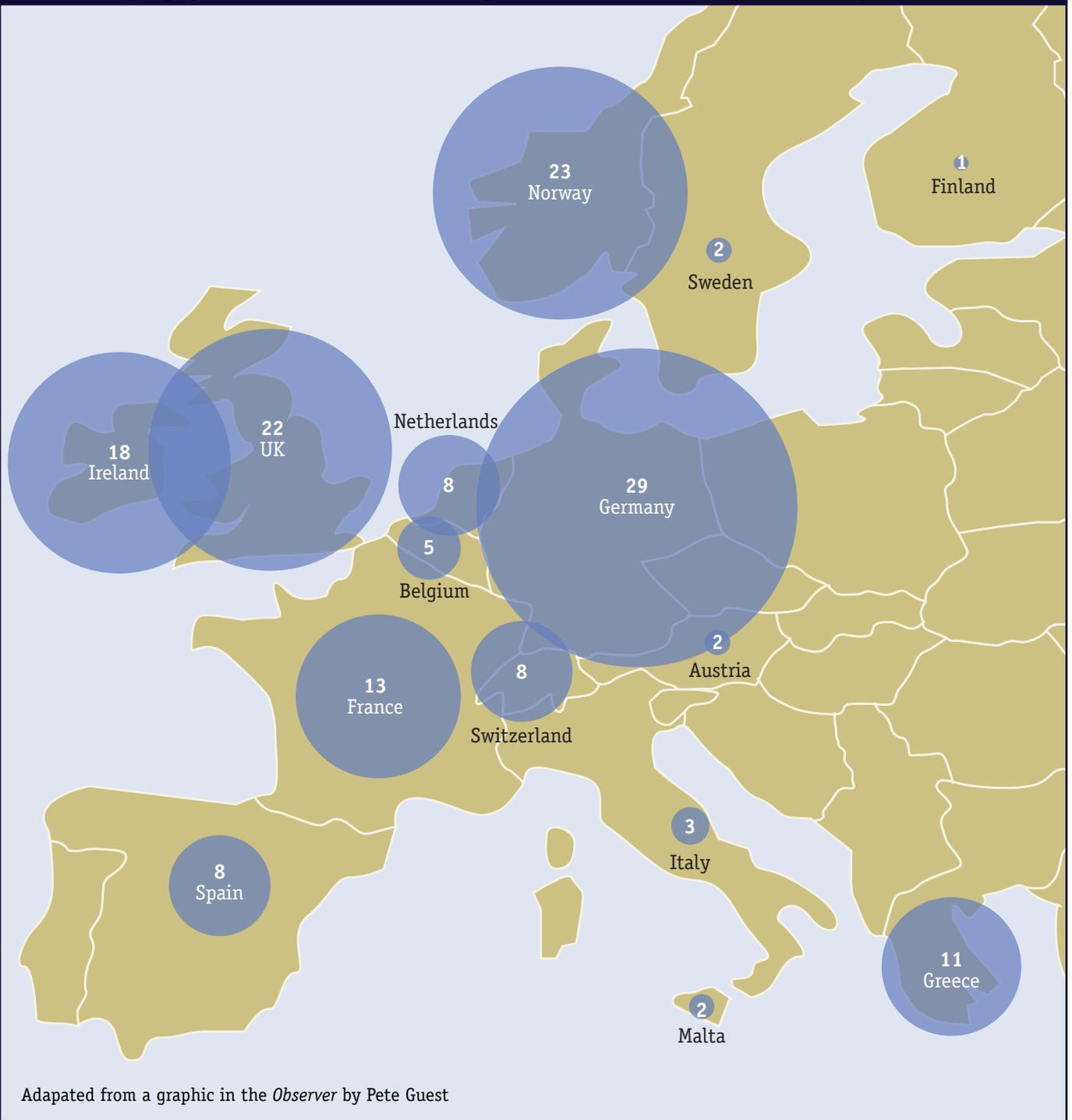
reception systems in these countries, which combine enforced dependency with institutionalised inhumanity. In southern Europe there were more deaths from the effects of destitution and from untreated illness.

There is a lack of information surrounding **thirty-two of the recorded deaths**.<sup>3</sup> In at least thirteen cases, death is ascribed to 'natural causes', with no further information; in other cases there may be circumstantial or disputed evidence pointing to neglect or brutality on the part of staff in detention centres, or to the stress of detention and impending deportation, exacerbating pre-existing conditions – but such evidence is rarely investigated.

In too many cases, those who die are unidentified. Sometimes only a nationality and an age are recorded, sometimes not even that. None of the twenty-three who died in Norway's reception centres are identified, and we know the names of only four of the eighteen who died, mostly in direct provision hostels, in Ireland in the past five years. Eight of those who died in Greece are unidentified, seven of the dead in France, eleven of those who died in Germany. In such cases, the dead are in a very literal sense 'unmournable'.

The difficulty we have had assembling even the amount of information we have testifies to the opacity of systems for recording deaths across Europe. There appears to be no publicly accessible register anywhere in Europe, for example, of those who die in circumstances engaging state responsibility (in detention, reception or accommodation centres, in asylum hostels or at the hands of state agents or their private proxies). Yet states have duties under international human rights law, not just to protect life and prevent those deaths that are preventable, but also to investigate deaths for which their responsibility is engaged, transparently and in a way that bereaved families can fully participate, so as to learn how their loved one died. Most EU states are not even at first base when it comes to recording and investigating migrants' deaths. Even in Ireland, with its inquest system, there is no transparency. If

Table 3: The geographic locations and number of migrants who have died immigration and asylum-related deaths



there is no publicly accessible record of deaths, how can states be held accountable?

Despite such handicaps, campaigns following deaths have sought accountability. In Spain, the death of Alpha Pam of untreated tuberculosis led to a national campaign to repeal the law excluding undocumented migrants from non-emergency medical treatment,

of which he was the first casualty, and to defend the principle of universal health care. In Germany, Mohammad Rahsepar's suicide in an asylum camp sparked a movement of protest across the country, against the system of compulsory residence which denied him the possibility of living with his sister, and for asylum seekers' right to live with dignity. Suicides in the Netherlands have led to large

campaigns demanding humane treatment for asylum seekers. A vigorous campaign by refugee organisations in Ireland over the deaths in ‘direct provision’ asylum accommodation has led to the setting up of a working party to investigate the system and examine alternatives.

What these campaigns emphasise is that these deaths are preventable. They are attributable to an inhumane system which denies dignity and hope. Like border deaths, these deaths at the heart of Europe must be counted, and accounted for,<sup>4</sup> both in the sense of giving the dead names, faces, histories, but also in the

sense of holding states accountable for them, as a first step to preventing future deaths.

## Notes

1. Of these, at least three are disputed, in that there are allegations that the deceased were beaten to death by guards. There is an additional death by overdose which we have not counted as suicide for lack of information.
2. This figure excludes the three disputed ‘suicides’ above.
3. This figure excludes the accidents and homicides in Norway referred to above.
4. See Leanne Weber and Sharon Pickering: *Globalisation of borders: death at the global frontier* (2011).

## LIST OF DEATHS

### AUSTRIA

**SNAPSHOT:** Austria’s use of police detention centres (PAZ) to hold migrants and asylum seekers along with criminal suspects was ended in 2014 following condemnation by the United Nations Committee Against Torture (UNCAT) and the Council of Europe’s Human Rights Commissioner, and a new, G4S-run dedicated immigration removal centre was opened.<sup>1</sup>

- **Arslan Duzhiev (37), 11/08/2010**

A Chechen asylum seeker, Duzhiev committed suicide in a deportation centre in Traiskirchen following the failure of three attempts to have his asylum claim dealt with in the country. Duzheiv had come to Austria via Poland earlier in 2010 after a ten-year ordeal, beginning with a brutal beating in 2000 in Dagestan, Russia by armed men in military camouflage, who abducted him. He was sent to prison, where he was unrecognisable to visiting relatives because of torture and beatings. Following his release he required lengthy medical treatment and then left Russia. The Austrian authorities detained

Duzhiev and his family in a deportation centre for return to Poland under the Dublin Regulation.<sup>2</sup> His repeated failures to overturn the decision left Duzhiev depressed, paranoid and fearful of being returned to Russia. He was found hanged by a rope in his cell.<sup>3</sup>

- **Zelimkhan Isakov (35), 27/09/2012**

Another Chechen asylum seeker, Isakov suffered a fatal heart attack in a deportation centre in Vienna. Isakov claimed to have spent two years in a Russian concentration camp where he had been tortured for taking part in the Chechen resistance. He was arrested in central Vienna for failing to produce identification documents to the police, and was detained and threatened with deportation to Russia despite an ongoing appeal against the refusal of asylum. In the detention centre, he had asked for medical help for pains in his chest and later all over his body for around two weeks, but received no medical attention as doctors believed he was lying to avoid deportation. On 17 March 2014, two doctors were charged with unintentional manslaughter and both were given 150-day prison sentences, later commuted to €150,000 fines.<sup>4</sup>

## BELGIUM

**SNAPSHOT:** The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) condemned Belgium in November 2010<sup>5</sup> for its failure to house asylum seekers. Dozens were evicted from railway stations in Brussels onto the streets; families with young children were allowed to stay, as there was nowhere else for them to go. UNCAT expressed concern over the length of asylum seekers' detention pending return under the Dublin Regulation.<sup>6</sup>

- **Yahya Tabbabi (31), 04/01/2010**

Tunisian migrant Tabbabi was found dead in his cell in the Vottem prison (Brussels), of an overdose of methadone and benzodiazepine, drugs prescribed by the prison doctor. The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network and the World Organisation Against Torture questioned the circumstances of his death, saying that according to his family, Tabbabi was not a drug addict, and they counter the prison's claim that a trained doctor had diagnosed him and prescribed the drugs correctly.<sup>7</sup>

- **Unidentified man, 02/06/2010**

An asylum seeker from the Ivory Coast died in the corridor of a reception centre in Charleroi. The man had recently been transferred to the reception centre due to his deteriorating mental health. As reception centres are notoriously overcrowded in Belgium, he had previously been living in a hostel where, for two months, he had been unable to access social or medical services. By the time his mental health had been assessed and he arrived at Charleroi, he was refusing to talk or to eat. A source says he was clearly emotionally stressed and ill, but Fedasil, the federal agency, made no attempt to assess his condition. An autopsy revealed that his death was not self-inflicted or caused by substance abuse, and his death was ascribed to 'natural causes'.<sup>8</sup>

- **Rexhep Salijaj (57), 02/02/2012**

An asylum seeker from Kosovo, Salijaj

committed suicide a few hours before his planned deportation from Belgium. The war in Kosovo separated Salijaj from his wife and five children, whom he found ten years later in Belgium. They tried to obtain residency for Salijaj through family reunification, but in July 2011 the law on family reunion changed and his application was rejected. A plea for humanitarian leave was ignored and he was to be deported on 3 February 2012. Subsequently, the Belgian NGO, the Organisation and Initiative for Refugees and Foreigners (CIRE), called for a repeal of the strict new law on family reunification.<sup>9</sup>

- **Samiyou Djimadou (29), 17/06/2013**

A Beninese asylum seeker, Djimadou committed suicide by drowning himself in a canal after an attempt to throw himself under a lorry in Nerder-over-Heembeek failed. Although asylum claims in Belgium should be examined within six months, Djimadou had been waiting for ten months, and had apparently suffered from psychological problems and insomnia due to fear of deportation and possible torture in Benin. A spokesperson for the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons claimed that the office had not been made aware of Djimadou's psychological problems, and if it had known, it would have expedited the application process.<sup>10</sup>

- **Aref Hassanzade (22), 10/2013**

An Afghan asylum seeker, Hassanzade was reportedly killed after refusal of asylum and return to Afghanistan. Hassanzade was from the Nangarhar Province and claimed that he fled because he did not want to join the Taliban, who were pressurising him. He arrived in Belgium in March 2009 and made four separate claims for protection, all of which were rejected. He returned to Afghanistan at the beginning of 2013, and on 14 October a lawyer from the Progressive Lawyers Network received a phone call from one of Hassanzade's friends reporting that he had been killed by the Taliban.<sup>11</sup>

## BULGARIA

**SNAPSHOT:** UNHCR and Amnesty International condemned Bulgaria's brutal and demeaning treatment of asylum seekers in 2013 and 2014, reporting on guards beating and forcibly preventing the entry of asylum seekers, and reception conditions featuring containers providing only one square metre of space for each occupant, showers shared by 100 people and toilets by fifty, in windowless and unheated accommodation.<sup>12</sup>

- **Unidentified man (35), 21/11/2013**

A Syrian refugee and father of three died after leaving the 'emergency centre' of Harmanli in the Haskovo Province. The man had been complaining of heart pain and medical problems but received no medical attention or care in the centre. He had arrived in Bulgaria with his wife and three children a week prior to his death, but they were released from the centre with no help or guidance on how to find accommodation in Sofia. They subsequently sought shelter in another asylum centre, Voenna Rampa, where it is believed that the father suffered a fatal cardiac arrest. An ambulance was called an hour after his death.<sup>13</sup>

## CYPRUS

**SNAPSHOT:** Migrants and asylum seekers, including undeportable Syrian refugees, are routinely detained for lengthy periods in Cyprus, in breach of EU safeguards, and women forcibly separated from young children, according to Amnesty International.<sup>14</sup>

- **Unidentified man (54), 31/01/2011**

A Pakistani undocumented migrant died after jumping from the window of his flat in Nicosia as the police arrived at the building to perform immigration checks. It appears that the man feared being detained and deported.<sup>15</sup>

- **Unidentified woman (39), 07/10/2012**

A Nepalese undocumented migrant died after jumping from a fifth-floor balcony in Larnaca when police arrived at the building after receiving complaints of noise. The woman feared that they were immigration police and that she would be deported. Six other people in the apartment were arrested by the police, two for not having a legal permit to stay in the country, and four for providing shelter to an irregular migrant.<sup>16</sup>

- **Kamiran Muhamad (33), 17/04/2013**

Syrian Kurdish asylum seeker Muhamad committed suicide in Arodes three months after fleeing Syria. The Cypriot authorities had refused asylum to Muhamad, a father of four. KISA, a Cypriot anti-racist NGO, describes the precarious situation of Kurdish refugees in Cyprus, as the Cypriot authorities provide visitor status to refugees but employment laws ban work by non-EU nationals, who remain unable to find employment or stable accommodation.<sup>17</sup>

- **Unnamed Syrian Kurd (27), 28/12/2013**

Another Syrian Kurd who was due to be deported at the end of a one-year sentence for possession of drugs hanged himself with his shoelaces in Nicosia central prison, following several unsuccessful suicide attempts. The man had reportedly learned that his mother and two nieces had been killed in Syria. He was supposedly under strict watch in solitary confinement.<sup>18</sup>

## FINLAND

**SNAPSHOT:** The very small capacity of Finland's dedicated immigration detention facilities (the total capacity was 42) means that undocumented migrants and asylum seekers are sometimes held in police detention, which has attracted criticism. Finland's deportation policies have also attracted criticism, as well as hunger strikes.<sup>19</sup>

- **Sergio Camilo Becerra González (26), 21/07/2014**

A Colombian undocumented migrant, González died in a prison in Helsinki after being taken into police custody for not having a legal permit to stay in the country. González had gone to Finland to study acrobatics, and had been accepted by a college after passing an entrance exam. He had twice won the Colombian cheerleader championship and was once crowned the Latin American champion. Police say that he committed suicide, but his family believe that his death was a result of police racism.<sup>20</sup>

## FRANCE

**SNAPSHOT:** A large proportion of asylum seekers in France, including families with children, are forced to sleep rough, according to a recent Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner report, as the country's asylum reception facilities are so inadequate that they accommodate only one-third of those needing housing. Conditions in the country's administrative detention centres, where nearly 25,000 were detained in 2011, have been criticised as poor, cramped and inadequate, and police have a reputation for brutality and racism.<sup>21</sup>

- **Mahamadou Maréga (38), 30/11/2011**

An undocumented migrant from Mali, Maréga threatened his landlord with a hammer and died handcuffed and shackled in a lift in Colombes, Haut-Seine, after between ten and seventeen police officers used batons, tear gas and up to sixteen taser charges in a spiral of violence to restrain him. Blood was found in his lungs in the autopsy, but pathologists differed, some saying he died from respiratory failure, others from latent sickle-cell anaemia fatally activated by the tasers. Interior minister Brice Hortefeux described Maréga as a 'maniac'. An investigation into police action found no case to answer.<sup>22</sup>

- **Alta Ming (34), 04/01/2011**

A Mongolian undocumented refugee and mother of two, Alta Ming died in hospital, ill and exhausted after moving between homeless hostels and the streets, going into labour prematurely with her third child. With her husband and two children, Ming had been refused asylum in the Netherlands, and the couple remained in a detention centre until November 2010, when she was released, ill, heavily pregnant and without her husband, who remained in detention. Given forty-eight hours to leave the country, she fled to France with the children, but with no legal status, no income, homeless and unable to seek health care. After her death, her children were reported as staying with family friends also living in a precarious situation.<sup>23</sup>

- **Aminullah Mohamadi (17), 11/05/2011**

An Afghan asylum seeker, Mohamadi was found hanged in the Parc de la Villette in Paris, a month before his eighteenth birthday. Mohamadi had fled to France in 2009, where he was not believed about his age despite providing a birth certificate, and was ordered to undergo a bone-age test. He fled from a hearing about his case in 2010 as he could not understand the proceedings (there was no provision for interpretation and he could not speak French). His brother said he was very depressed and anxious about turning eighteen and being returned to Afghanistan, where he feared being forced to join the Taliban.<sup>24</sup>

- **Marius B. (45), 13/08/2011**

A Roma migrant from Romania, Marius B. was found hanged in his cell in a Nîmes detention centre, where he had been held for fifteen days. The NGO Cimade states that Marius, a father of two, did not know why he was being held in the centre, as he was from a European country. He had sold all his belongings in Romania in order to leave the country, and did not want to be returned there.<sup>25</sup>

- **Six unidentified men (24-36), 28/09/2011**

Six Libyan and Tunisian undocumented

migrants died in a fire caused by a fallen candle in a squat in Pantin, Paris. The migrants, most of whom were Tunisian, were destitute and lived in the squat with other undocumented migrants. The lawyer of four of the families of those who died requested provisional residency permits for seventeen survivors of the fire, but by the end of 2013, only two of the seventeen had received permits. An Egyptian migrant was given an eighteen-month prison sentence for accidentally causing the fire. The French NGO, the League for Human Rights, has said that the incident highlights the urgent need for safe accommodation for undocumented migrants.<sup>26</sup>

- **Ismael (20), 22/12/2011**

An Ethiopian asylum seeker, Ismael was found dead at the bottom of a bridge in the centre of Calais. Ismael was well-known in migrant and activist circles in Calais, and his friends disagree with the Boulogne-sur-Mer public prosecutor's theory that he committed suicide, stating that the drop was not of itself enough to kill him. An inquest and autopsy were refused.<sup>27</sup>

- **Unidentified man (27), 19/09/2013**

A Bosnian asylum seeker was found dead in his tent in a makeshift camp in a disused parking lot in Metz. It is believed that the man was in poor health and that he died of natural causes. The French charity, the Moselle Collective for the Struggle Against Poverty, states that prior to his death, they had made complaints about the poor conditions of those living in the camp, to no avail. As a consequence of his death, a court in Strasbourg has ordered the demolition of the camp and the re-housing of the other asylum seekers. The Collective is lobbying for the upholding of the dignity of asylum seekers and for urgent liveable accommodation.<sup>28</sup>

- **Dorel Iosif Floarea (42), 29/07/2014**

A Romanian migrant, Floarea died in Montgeron, Essonne, after being apprehended by police and shot in the stomach with live ammunition, as well as by a 'flash-ball'

gun (which fires rubber bullets). Floarea, his brother and a friend were drinking near a building squatted by minority ethnic groups when the police arrived and told them to stop drinking. One policeman allegedly grabbed Floarea's bottle, emptied its contents and threw it in the bin. Another officer claimed that he felt threatened by Floarea, tried to move away from him and fell. A third policeman then shot Floarea with a 'flash-ball', and the policeman on the ground shot him in the thorax. Floarea died of his injuries. An investigation has been opened.<sup>29</sup>

- **Abdelhak Goradia (51), 21/08/2014**

An Algerian undocumented migrant, Goradia died after being driven to the airport by police for deportation. He had received a deportation notice nine days earlier, after being convicted of theft, fraud and aggravated assault on his brother. Despite his lawyer reminding the police several times that the deportation could not go ahead because legal proceedings were ongoing, Goradia was allegedly handcuffed, removed from his cell and driven to the airport. The police initially stated that Goradia died from a 'sudden heart attack', but the autopsy found that he died from asphyxiation and vomiting. Investigations have begun into an 'involuntary homicide' case.<sup>30</sup>

## GERMANY

**SNAPSHOT:** In September 2014, footage emerged from Germany showing guards from one of the main operators of asylum reception facilities, European Homecare, abusing asylum seekers, forcing them to lie down on mattresses covered in vomit and standing with a boot on their neck. Germany's use of prisons to detain migrants and asylum seekers has been condemned by the European Court of Justice, and hunger strikes and protests at detention conditions and treatment are common – as are protests against the law of compulsory residence.<sup>31</sup>

- **Vadim Z. (23), 20/01/2010**

A Latvian man, Vadim Z. committed suicide on a railway line near Hamburg. He had come to Germany with his parents in 1992, but was deported in 2005 for burglary. He returned to Germany illegally but remained in fear of being deported again and could not bear it.<sup>32</sup>

- **Unidentified asylum seeker (34), 13/02/2010**

An asylum seeker who has not been identified was hit by a train as he walked along the track towards Karlsruhe. He had claimed asylum in Stuttgart days earlier and was told to go to the reception centre at Karlsruhe, but was given no help to travel there.<sup>33</sup>

- **David Mardiani, 07/03/2010**

A Georgian asylum seeker, Mardiani committed suicide at the Hahnöfersand juvenile detention centre, awaiting return to Poland under the Dublin Regulation. The immigration authorities had disputed Mardiani's claim to be a minor. The Hamburg Refugee Support Organisation called for an independent inquiry into his suicide, saying that institutional neglect and standard medical care in the detention centre hospital, as well as systematic denial of asylum seekers' legal rights in the centre, contributed to Mardiani's suicide.<sup>34</sup>

- **Yeni P. (34), 16/04/2010**

An Indonesian migrant, Yeni P. committed suicide in a pre-deportation centre in Hamburg. Yeni hanged herself after receiving a deportation order for 'violation of the Residence Act'. German press attempted to portray her as a gold-digger, married three times to different German men.<sup>35</sup>

- **Slawik C. (58), 02/07/2010**

An Azerbaijani migrant, Slawik C. committed suicide in his cell in the Lower Saxony central detention centre in Hannover-Langenhagen. Slawik took an overdose of medication prescribed to him by doctors in the detention centre to control his alleged anger. He had lived with his wife and son in

Germany for around eleven years before he was arrested and detained. Various groups have accused German Interpol of providing false Armenian identification data and papers in order to deport Slawik to Armenia, despite his having fled Azerbaijan in 1999.<sup>36</sup>

- **Unidentified man, 08/02/2011**

An Iranian asylum seeker committed suicide in his prison cell in München-Stadelheim, Bavaria. The man was detained pending return to Bulgaria under the Dublin Regulation.<sup>37</sup>

- **Unidentified boy (10), 24/02/2011**

A Serbian child and son of an asylum seeker died after being hit by a train in Braunschweig (Lower Saxony). He and his father had been living in the Boeselagerstraße refugee camp since January, and were on their way back from the town to the camp – a journey which necessitated crossing the railway line – when the boy's doll pram got caught on in the railway track. As he tried to free it, he was hit by the train. After his death, asylum seekers complained to the police and to Deutsche Bahn (German Rail) about the track. The company refused to install new barriers, stating that it would take until late 2014/ early 2015 because of the 'extensive planning' that would be necessary, and refused to get trains to slow down to walking pace as they approached.<sup>38</sup>

- **Shambu Lama (40), 01/03/2011**

A Nepalese man, Lama committed suicide at the Gifhorn train station (Lower Saxony). He had been in Germany since 1996 with a 'tolerated' (*Duldung*) status, but in February 2011 the Aliens' Office notified him that he was to be deported within days, despite his fourteen years of residence and his ten-month old German-born son. The Aliens' Office disputed his paternity and ignored a request from the Braunschweig administrative court to lift the deportation and grant a residence permit. Lama lay down on a railway line and was hit by a train. His lawyer claimed that the deportation notice 'drove him into such a mentally hopeless

- situation that he committed suicide'. The Left party (Die Linke) raised Lama's death in parliament, and his lawyer filed a complaint against two officials in the Gifhorn Aliens' Office, but the local authority denied responsibility for his death.<sup>39</sup>
- **Unidentified man (22), 13/08/2011**  
 An Iraqi asylum seeker was found hanged near the General Henke Barracks (a former military barracks turned into an asylum accommodation centre) in Neuwied, Rhineland. An autopsy found that, although his hands were tied behind his back, his death was suicide, and no foul play was suspected. He had previously threatened suicide.<sup>40</sup>
  - **Michael Kelly (37), 17/09/2011**  
 A Liberian asylum seeker, Kelly was found dead in his room in the Gerstungen refugee camp in Thuringia, after residents became aware of the smell of decomposition. Kelly died of pneumonia. He had been in hospital between 19 June and 7 July, but after his health improved he was sent back to the camp, which is known to be very unsanitary, with mould on the walls causing and aggravating respiratory problems. Residents blame the staff camp for negligence, highlighting their failure to discover the body earlier.<sup>41</sup>
  - **Unidentified man (36), 21/10/2011**  
 An Algerian asylum seeker committed suicide by setting his prison cell on fire. He had attempted to claim asylum in Denmark, Finland and Norway before going to Germany, where the authorities discovered that he was wanted in the United Kingdom for an unknown offence. He was placed in immigration detention, and then transferred to a prison in Neumünster to await extradition to the UK. Fellow detainees say that prison staff took ten minutes to respond to the alarm they activated when they heard the man's screams. The prison management deny all accusations and claim to have been unaware of his suicidal intent, which detainees say they had known.<sup>42</sup>
  - **Unidentified asylum seeker (63), 03/12/2011**  
 Ten months after the death of a 10-year-old boy (see above), a Serbian asylum seeker died after being hit by a train in Braunschweig (Lower Saxony). He had moved from Dortmund to the Boeselagerstraße refugee camp, and was crossing the railway track on his way from the camp to the supermarket. Asylum seekers must cross this railway track in order to access the shops and town, and camp residents claim that there are no barriers and that the warning bells frequently do not work. Deutsche Bahn, the company responsible for the track, has refused to install barriers or to get the trains to slow down to walking pace.<sup>43</sup>
  - **Mohammad Rahsepar (29), 29/01/2012**  
 An Iranian asylum seeker hanged himself from the window of his room in the Würzburg asylum camp in Franconia, Bavaria. Doctors had diagnosed physical and mental strain from torture in Iran, exacerbated by having to stay in the camp. They reported that he was suicidal and urged that he be allowed to move in with his sister in Cologne, or that he be hospitalised. Neither was permitted. On the day of his death, he had gone to hospital with a bad headache, but no interpretation services were made available so he left a couple of hours later. When he was found dead, camp residents stated that he had 'ended his struggle to find a way to be able to live with dignity in a human society'. Rahsepar's death sparked a series of protests and hunger strikes all over Germany.<sup>44</sup>
  - **Barry B. (25), 13/02/2012**  
 An asylum seeker from Sierra Leone was found dead in his cell within the central hospital of the Holstenglacis prison in Hamburg. Bubaker, who fled his country at the age of fifteen after being abused as a child soldier, was deemed not to be a child by the German authorities. He was refused asylum in 2002 and was only given temporary residency in 2007 on the basis of his mental and physical health problems (he had liver cirrhosis, epilepsy, anaemia, and

- oesophageal and gastric diseases). In 2012 he was arrested for an assault, and was unable to contact his lawyer because he did not know how to spell his name. Because it was considered that he might abscond, he was placed in prison, where he had an epileptic fit two days later. His doctor was not contacted for his medical history, nor were patient files sought from hospitals where he had previously been treated. He died as a result of a further epileptic fit.<sup>45</sup>
- **Samir Hashemi (27), 04/09/2012**  
An Iranian asylum seeker, Hashemi was found dead in his room in a reception centre in Charlottenstraße (Kirchheim unter Teck). He had committed suicide by taking poison. For months, Hashemi had been waiting and asking for his asylum interview, but never received an answer. He had attempted suicide twice before in the ten months that he had lived in Germany, and had been sent for psychiatric treatment but returned to the reception centre after five days.<sup>46</sup>
  - **Firad A. (20), 10/10/2012**  
An asylum seeker from Azerbaijan committed suicide in front of a church in Heimbuchenthal (Bavaria). He had been in Germany for a year, living in a refugee centre, the Hotel Hobelspan, and had received medical treatment.<sup>47</sup>
  - **Mihsen Jindi Sharu (33), 18/02/2013**  
An Iraqi Kurdish refugee, Sharu was found dead in his room in an asylum hostel in Regensburg, Bavaria. Sharu suffered from mental illness, and although he had a statutory guardian, lived an isolated life in the hostel. He died of an overdose of medication, and his body was not found for three days. The regional authorities responded to accusations of neglect by saying that since Sharu had been officially recognised as a refugee, he was no longer obliged to live in the hostel, so the authorities had no further responsibility for him.<sup>48</sup>
  - **Unidentified man (20), 02/03/2013**  
An Iraqi asylum seeker was fatally stabbed by his roommate in their asylum hostel in Wörth, Bavaria. His roommate was suffering from psychiatric problems but had been unable to obtain help or treatment.<sup>49</sup>
  - **Hamed Samii (28), 06/03/2013**  
An Iranian asylum seeker, Samii is believed to have committed suicide through taking an overdose of his medication in his asylum hostel in Hof, Bavaria. Samii, who had lived in Germany for twenty months, suffered from severe depression. His friends say that living conditions within the hostel and the arbitrariness of the asylum process had placed him under enormous psychological pressure. The group United4Iran Bavaria, together with the Green Party, say that the treatment of asylum seekers in Bavaria is particularly harsh, with compulsory residence and food parcels instead of cash support.<sup>50</sup>
  - **Cosmo Saizon (33), 25/04/2013**  
A Beninese asylum seeker, Saizon died in a hospital at Friedersdorf (Saxony-Anhalt). He was not properly medically investigated when, a few days earlier, he complained of severe pains, but instead, medical staff at the accommodation camp where he resided gave him antibiotics. An ambulance had to be called later when his condition got much worse and he became deaf. He underwent surgery at a Bitterfeld Hospital, but friends calling the hospital could not find out his condition or diagnosis, and only discovered that he had died five days later, at a protest about camp living conditions. The group ARN Sachsen-Anstalt claims that Saizon's death was a direct result of policies that give asylum seekers access only to emergency medical treatment.<sup>51</sup>
  - **Unidentified man (25), 30/04/2013**  
An Iraqi Kurdish asylum seeker was hit by a train and died in Gerstungen, Thuringia, crossing the railway line which divides the refugee camp he was residing in from the town and shops.<sup>52</sup>
  - **Hashim Yasbek (34), 05/2013**  
A Lebanese asylum seeker, Yasbek was found

dead in early May in an asylum centre in Torgauer Straße, Leipzig. Yasbek died of a heroin overdose, and his body was not discovered for several weeks. Conditions in the asylum centre were said to be inhuman, and there were discussions ongoing over closing the hostel and providing asylum seekers with individual flats.<sup>53</sup>

- **Djamaa Isu (21), 28/05/2013**

An asylum seeker from Chad, Isu was found dead in the Brandenburg asylum camp in Eisenhüttenstadt. Isu, who had been refused asylum and had not received necessary medical care, according to other inmates, hanged himself in the camp where he was being held awaiting deportation. The camp, run by a private company BOSS, is said to be dirty and overcrowded, and there are frequent protests.<sup>54</sup>



*A vigil held for Djamaa Isu (21), an asylum seeker from Chad, who committed suicide in the Brandenburg asylum camp in Germany.*

- **Adams Bagna, 30/05/2013**

A Nigerian asylum seeker, Bagna died after suffering an acute asthma attack in an accommodation camp in Bernburg. Bagna was a chronic asthma sufferer, and it is claimed that poor conditions and inadequate medical care in the camp contributed to his death. The German NGO Anti-Racist Initiative reports that many camp residents suffer from respiratory problems from the mould and the use of insecticides nearby.<sup>55</sup>

- **Unidentified man, 16/06/2013**

An asylum seeker who was not identified committed suicide in the accommodation camp of Raesfeld in Hamburg. He died in hospital after setting himself on fire in May.<sup>56</sup>

- **Unidentified man, 08/2013**

An Indian asylum seeker committed suicide in a refugee centre in Harbke.<sup>57</sup>

- **Kallo Al-Hassan (43), 06/12/2013**

A Ghanaian asylum seeker, Hassan died in a refugee centre through the authorities' severely delayed response to a medical crisis.<sup>58</sup>

- **Ahmed J. (43), 14/02/2014**

A Libyan asylum seeker died of a pulmonary embolism in an accommodation camp in Plauen. Ahmed and his family had fled to Germany in 2013. A few days before his death, he was examined at a hospital for acute pain, but was sent back to the camp without treatment. Witnesses, fellow asylum seekers and refugees, claim that security staff on duty saw Ahmed writhing around in pain prior to his death. According to Ahmed's roommate, it took over two hours for the guard on duty to call an ambulance. By the time it arrived, Ahmed was dead. An investigation is taking place to establish whether the guards are in some way culpable, and the NGO ProAsyl has called for an investigation into the medical professionals who sent him back from the hospital.<sup>59</sup>

## GREECE

**SNAPSHOT:** Conditions in Greece's squalid, unsanitary and insanely overcrowded migrant detention centres and police cells (one police station held 100 people for four months in a 70m<sup>2</sup> space) have attracted condemnation from just about every human rights body and court, and led to the acquittal of seventeen migrants who escaped on the ground that they could not be expected to stay there. In February 2015 the new government announced that it would detain migrants only exceptionally and would close the notorious Amygdaleza detention centre, the site of many suicides and protests.<sup>60</sup>

- **Unidentified man, 11/2011**

An undocumented migrant of Asian origin was found dead by police in Peplos. The circumstances around his death remain unclear, but it is reported that he died of hypothermia due to his precarious living conditions.<sup>61</sup>

- **Unidentified man, 02/01/2012**

An undocumented Afghan migrant died in Patras after inhaling the fumes of a fire that he and two compatriots had lit in a tin can to keep warm. They had been living in an abandoned truck outside a derelict factory. Two days after his death, police raided the factory and evicted around thirty Afghan asylum seekers who were sheltering from the cold.<sup>62</sup>

- **Unidentified man (55), 03/01/2012**

An undocumented Indian migrant was found dead in a container near Thiva which he used as a shelter.<sup>63</sup>

- **Unidentified man, 29/02/2012**

An undocumented Egyptian migrant was found dead in Corinth. He had been seeking shelter in a warehouse to avoid the very low night-time temperatures.<sup>64</sup>

- **Babakar Dia (39), 02/02/2013**

A Senegalese asylum seeker, Dia died after falling and hitting his head on the track at

Thisio metro station in Athens. Dia had been running away from police officers during Operation Xenios Zeus (a mass stop and search operation in the capital to round up undocumented migrants). After his death, a spontaneous protest started in the area, which was quelled by riot police using batons and tear gas.<sup>65</sup>

- **Unidentified man (20), 06/2013**

An asylum seeker from the Ivory Coast committed suicide in the Grevena police station, north-western Greece.<sup>66</sup>

- **Unidentified man (26), 11/07/2013**

A Pakistani undocumented migrant committed suicide in the Servia police station in Kozani. The man had been arrested and detained for illegally entering the country in April. Conditions in the Servia police station, which is designed for short-term use, are said to be very poor, with ten men sleeping in one small room, often for long periods. The man hanged himself from a pipe in the bathroom using a strip of his bedding. The authorities said that the death would be investigated.<sup>67</sup>

- **Mohammed Hasan (27), 27/07/2013**

An Afghan asylum seeker, Hasan died in the Sismanogleio General Hospital in Vrilissia (Athens). He had been held in the Korinthos immigration detention centre since 2012, and had been complaining of severe chest pains for a few months, but had not been permitted to go to hospital until a large protest movement by fellow detainees forced the issue in early July. Once there, Hasan was diagnosed with a serious lung infection. Several Greek refugee and migrants' rights NGOs as well as the then opposition party Syriza demanded an investigation into Hasan's death.<sup>68</sup>

- **Nezam Hakimi, 04/11/2013**

An Afghan asylum seeker, Hakimi died of untreated cancer in Corinth detention centre, where he had been detained for four months without receiving medical treatment.<sup>69</sup>

- **Unidentified man (52), 07/2014**

An unidentified man died at the Agia Olga Hospital after complaining about severe pain and health problems at the Amygdaleza immigration detention centre.<sup>70</sup>

- **Unidentified man (26), 17/11/2014**

A Pakistani undocumented migrant died in hospital in Athens. He had been complaining of respiratory problems for several months in the Amygdaleza detention centre, and was refused medical help until he was taken to hospital too late. He had allegedly been beaten by the police in the Corinth detention centre, where he had previously been detained.<sup>71</sup>

## IRELAND

**SNAPSHOT:** In August 2013 a court in Northern Ireland refused to return a Sudanese Darfuri family to the Republic of Ireland because the system of direct provision was inimical to children's best interests. The court cited the inability of the parents to work, the family's being forced to live communally in asylum hostels, their resulting inability to develop a sense of belonging, and the risks to their physical and mental health.<sup>72</sup>

- **Five unidentified people, 2010**

A report from the Department of Justice and Equality revealed that five unidentified asylum seekers of unknown origin – two female and three male – had died in direct provision centres in 2010. The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) has stated that it cannot confirm causes of death, since it does not have access to death certificates. MPs' attempts to find out more have been unsuccessful.<sup>73</sup>

- **Unidentified man (28), 08/2010**

A Congolese man died of unknown causes in the direct provision centre Glenvera Hostel in Cork. The man had first claimed asylum in Ireland in 2008.<sup>74</sup>

- **Unidentified person, 2011**

The death of this unidentified male asylum seeker from unknown causes in a direct provision centre was revealed in the same Department of Justice and Equality report.<sup>75</sup>

- **Five unidentified people, 2012**

The deaths of five unidentified asylum seekers, two female and three male, from unknown causes in direct provision centres were revealed in the same Department of Justice and Equality report.<sup>76</sup>

- **Emmanuel Marcel Landa (62), 21/09/2012**

Landa, a Congolese asylum seeker, died of suspected heart failure, in the Mosney direct provision centre in County Meath. He had been in the asylum process for seven years, and had suffered several heart attacks during and after failed deportation attempts the previous year. His death galvanised a campaign against the system of direct provision.<sup>77</sup>

- **Unidentified person, 2013**

The death of this unidentified female asylum seeker from unknown causes in a direct provision centre was revealed in the same Department of Justice and Equality report.<sup>78</sup>

- **Henryk Piotrowski (43), 23/08/2013**

A Polish migrant, Piotrowski died in Dublin crushed in a recycling bin. He had been given notice to leave the Frederick Hall hostel for homeless eastern EU migrants, which was to be turned into a one-night facility. Consequently, he started sleeping in bins for shelter, and was crushed when the recycling bin he was sleeping in was emptied one night. The death has raised concerns over conditions in Ireland for homeless migrants, who are not entitled to social welfare payments and are reliant on emergency homeless shelters.<sup>79</sup>

- **Tahir Mahmood (48), 16/09/2013**

Mahmood, a Pakistani asylum seeker, died from complications of hepatitis and

liver problems at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital in Dublin. Mahmood lived with his wife and four children in Clondalkin Towers direct provision centre, and his illnesses meant he had difficulties walking and found it extremely hard to get to the hospital. His requests for a transfer to a more centrally located accommodation centre, and for a hospital social worker, were refused, and he was not given the diet indicated by his liver problems. A drug prescribed by the hospital for constipation gave him nausea, stomach cramps, skin reaction, runny nose, swollen face and ankles, thirst and itching, listed as potentially dangerous in the instructions. As Mahmood could not read these he did not contact the doctor, and died soon after his return to the hospital.<sup>80</sup>

- **Unidentified man, 2014**

The death of this unidentified man from unknown causes in a direct provision centre was revealed in the same Department of Justice and Equality report.<sup>81</sup>

- **Mohamed Sleyum Ali, 06/04/2014**

Refused asylum seeker Sleyum died at the hands of the Tanzanian authorities days after he was deported from Ireland. Sleyum came to Ireland on a Tanzanian passport, but claimed to be Somali – a claim which was rejected, along with his asylum application. When he was ordered to report to the authorities for deportation he absconded to Dublin, where later, gardai stopped the car in which he was a passenger, for a random check. When the deportation order was discovered, Sleyum was taken to Cloverhill Prison, Clondalkin, and was deported at the beginning of April. After his return to Tanzania, he was beaten and tortured for several days by the authorities, and then thrown out on the street. He later died in hospital.<sup>82</sup>

## ITALY

**SNAPSHOT:** The reception centre at Lampedusa, Italy, became notorious in 2014 when video footage showed guards hosing down naked asylum seekers in scenes reminiscent of concentration camps. Italy's detention centres for undocumented migrants have been the subject of many protests, hunger strikes and riots because of their appalling conditions, which have caused very high rates of self-harm.<sup>83</sup>

- **Mohammed Al Abbouby (25), 15/01/2010**

A north African migrant, Abbouby committed suicide in his cell in the San Vittore prison, Milan. He was one of fourteen men convicted of arson following major disturbances at the Via Corelli Identification and Expulsion Centre (CIE) in 2009. The prison authorities claim that he was a drug addict who died of an overdose.<sup>84</sup>

- **Fares Chebchoub, 03/12/2011**

Chebchoub, an Algerian asylum seeker, was found hanged in his room in the Cagliari reception centre. His family are demanding an investigation into his death.<sup>85</sup>

- **Moustapha Anaki (31), 10/08/2013**

A Moroccan undocumented migrant, Anaki died of suspected heart problems in the Crotona reception centre in Calabria. He had been in the country for seven years before he was arrested and detained as undocumented. The management of the centre stated that he had been suffering from heart problems.<sup>86</sup>

## MALTA

**SNAPSHOT:** Malta's policy of automatic detention of asylum seekers, in breach of EU and international law means old, young and vulnerable are locked up in prison-like conditions – sometimes on army bases like Safi – for lengthy periods. Children are held with adults, with no access to school. In open reception centres, small trailers house up to eight people.<sup>87</sup>

- **Ifeanyi Nwokoye (29), 04/2011**  
A Nigerian asylum seeker, Nwokoye died



*A demonstration to protest the deaths of Ifeanyi Nwokoye in March 2011 and Mamadou Kamara in June 2012, both allegedly beaten by soldiers at the Safi Barracks detention centre in Malta after attempted escapes.*

after escaping from the Safi Barracks detention centre. He was recaptured, and allegedly beaten by five guards, including a soldier from the Maltese Armed Forces. A government inquiry set up to investigate his death recommended that all detention centre officials should be trained in first aid. In February 2014, two guards were charged with Nwokoye's murder. The trial was continuing at the end of December 2014.<sup>88</sup>

- **Mamadou Kamara (32), 30/06/2012**  
A Malian asylum seeker, Kamara died of severe injuries, believed to have been inflicted by beating on his recapture after escaping from Safi detention centre. Three detention officers were charged with his murder. An independent inquiry was ordered by the prime minister's office, and reported in December 2014. The trial of the three officers has not begun, although in February 2015 a soldier was jailed for eighteen months for covering up the killing. Kamara left a Maltese girlfriend and seven-month-old daughter.<sup>89</sup>

## NETHERLANDS

**SNAPSHOT:** Detention conditions for asylum seekers in the Netherlands have been condemned as too like criminal incarceration by Amnesty International among others, and in 2013 led to a wave of hunger strikes in protest at institutionalised neglect, abuse and violence.<sup>90</sup>

- **Allan Koomson, 22/02/2010**  
A Ghanaian arrested at the end of 2009 for working without a visa, Koomson spoke to his sister in the UK from a detention centre on 14 February 2010, with no apparent health problems, but a week later he was on life support, and then his family were told he was dead. Although the Dutch authorities offered his family damages and an apology, they have refused to disclose the cause of his death, which remains a mystery.<sup>91</sup>
- **Unidentified man (42), 29/07/2010**  
An undocumented Pakistani migrant died

falling from a balcony while trying to escape immigration police in the Hague.<sup>92</sup>

- **Franklin Othieno (29), 12/09/2010**  
A Kenyan man died at Schipol airport during his deportation following the refusal of his asylum claim.<sup>93</sup>
- **Kambiz Roustayi (36) 06/04/2011**  
Roustayi, an Iranian asylum seeker, committed suicide by setting himself on fire in Dam Square in Amsterdam.<sup>94</sup>
- **Predrag Molnar Guma (40), 22/12/2011**  
A Serbian undocumented man, Guma committed suicide in his cell in the Noordwest detention unit, Meer en Waart (Amsterdam). He had been found without valid identity documents and arrested on 18 December.<sup>95</sup>
- **Alain Hatungimana (36), 09/04/2012**  
A Burundian asylum seeker, Hatungimana committed suicide in an asylum centre at Culemborg. His asylum claim had been refused despite the local authority's intervention on behalf of his two children, aged 12 and 14, who had lost their mother in the civil war. Hatungimana became depressed and fearful for his children's futures, and subsequently took his own life so that his children would be allowed to remain in the country.<sup>96</sup>
- **Aleksandr Dolmatov (36), 17/01/2013**  
A Russian asylum seeker, Dolmatov committed suicide in Rotterdam airport immigration removal centre. He was an engineer and anti-Putin activist who was arrested at a protest and fled Russia in May 2012, citing harassment from authorities. He claimed asylum in the Netherlands and was housed at the Gravendeel reception centre until his claim was rejected on the basis of assurances from the Russian government that he would only be fined for illegal exit. Dolmatov became increasingly isolated and fearful of the Russian authorities, with family and his lawyer claiming that the Russian security services were threatening him shortly before his death. Despite a pending appeal, he was moved to

the Dordrecht deportation centre and then to the Rotterdam immigration removal centre. An official report ordered by the ministry of justice blamed failings in Dutch asylum policy for the death. Following its publication, the Security and Justice Minister announced improvements in the system to ensure that refused asylum seekers who lodged an appeal were not listed as 'illegal'.<sup>97</sup>

- **Unidentified man (30), 13/04/2014**  
An Armenian asylum seeker committed suicide near the AZC (asylum reception centre) Schalkhaar in Deventer. He had arrived in the Netherlands in November 2013, and was awaiting deportation to Germany under the Dublin Regulation. He had serious psychological problems and suffered from severe delusions, but because of his pending deportation, was given no psychiatric support. He said that he felt much calmer in the Netherlands, and claimed to have crushed his nose in Germany as he believed that a bugging device had been implanted in it. Two asylum lawyers accused the Dutch authorities of putting politics before health, and the political opposition called for the Security and Justice Minister to make a statement, particularly in the light of promises for a more 'humane' asylum system after the suicide of Aleksandr Dolmatov in 2013.<sup>98</sup>

## NORWAY

**SNAPSHOT:** Concerns have been expressed about Norway's detention of asylum seekers, including children, and its prioritising of returns over children's welfare. Politicians' use of phrases such as 'fortune hunters' to describe refugees, and moves to deport many Eritrean refugees, have also been condemned.<sup>99</sup>

- **Twenty-two unidentified people, 2012**  
The deaths of twenty-two unidentified people in Norway's reception centres in 2012 have been recorded. Until October 2013, Norway did not record the deaths

of non-Norwegian citizens in their public records. Under pressure from the UNHCR, it seems that the deaths have been noted, but details of the identities or causes not released. It is believed that at least four of the deaths were suicides, three were homicides, and two died as a result of accidents. No further information is available about any of these deaths.<sup>100</sup>

- **Unidentified man (31), 11/09/2014**

A South Sudanese asylum seeker committed suicide by throwing himself off the roof of Bergen prison. The man had allegedly attempted suicide when his asylum claim was rejected, and had then 'run amok' and killed three passengers on a bus. Despite the fact that he was diagnosed with psychosis after the killings, he was held in prison, not in a psychiatric hospital, and was considered fit to stand trial. He was in the middle of a conversation with two psychologists and three prison guards in Bergen Prison when he threw himself off the roof, dying two weeks later in hospital. His death led to calls by several psychiatrists for patients to be held for longer in psychiatric wards, and for an examination of the treatment of mentally ill defendants.<sup>101</sup>

## SPAIN

**SNAPSHOT:** Spain's migrant detention centres are run by the police and were not regulated centrally until two deaths within weeks in 2012 forced the government to intervene. However, the regulations promulgated were condemned for failure to remedy a shocking situation, in which even basic information about detention facilities (mainly old prisons and barracks) was lacking, no minimum standards set out for treatment of detainees, failure to investigate complaints of ill-treatment, and a culture of neglect and impunity. Denial of health care to undocumented migrants has more recently become the subject of a strong campaign.<sup>102</sup>

- **Mohammed Abagui (22), 13/05/2010**

A Moroccan asylum seeker died in the Zona Franca aliens' detention centre in Barcelona, described by its inmates as the 'Guantánamo of Spain'. The authorities said that Abagui committed suicide after being put in solitary confinement pending his deportation. The facts surrounding his death are obscure, with some countering the authorities' claim



*Aramis Manukyan, an Armenian asylum seeker, was found dead in his cell in the Zona Franca detention centre in Barcelona in December 2013.*

- of suicide, claiming Abagui was beaten by guards, who have a reputation for brutality.<sup>103</sup>
- **Mike, Sonsha and Sony, 25/03/2011**  
 Three migrants from Ghana and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa died in a fire in their shack in the Spanish north African enclave of Melilla. The shack, near the Migrants' Temporary Centre, was one of many occupied by migrants waiting in limbo for three years or more for regularisation, to enable them to move to mainland Spain. It is believed that the fire was caused by a fallen candle.<sup>104</sup>
  - **Samba Martine (34), 19/12/2011**  
 A Congolese asylum seeker detained in the Aluche centre, Martine was taken to a hospital in Madrid where she died of AIDS-related meningitis. In the weeks before her death, Martine had been to the centre's health clinic ten times complaining of persistent headaches, flu, chest pains, coughing and other symptoms associated with the HIV virus. She had been provided with a interpreter only once, despite speaking no Spanish, and had not been tested for HIV. Martine's mother brought a case of medical negligence, but the court dismissed the claim, ruling that doctors were not obliged to carry out HIV tests. On appeal, evidence emerged that Martine had tested positive for the virus in a temporary detention centre in Melilla two months before her transfer to Madrid, but the test results had not been sent on to the Aluche detention centre.<sup>105</sup>
  - **Idrissa Diallo (21), 06/01/2012**  
 An undocumented migrant from Guinea-Conakry, Diallo died in the Zona Franca detention centre in Barcelona after complaining of chest pains. Fellow detainees claim that guards within the centre delayed in seeking medical help, and say there is no twenty-four hour medical facility at the centre, only twice weekly visits by a doctor.<sup>106</sup>
  - **Aramis Manukyan (32), 03/12/2013**  
 An Armenian asylum seeker, Manukyan was found dead in his cell in the Zona

Franca detention centre, Barcelona, where he had been in solitary confinement for twelve days. Guards claimed that Manukyan hanged himself by his shoelaces, but fellow detainees say that he was taken out of his cell and beaten before being locked up again, and claim to have heard groans and cries for help from his cell. A legal adviser also queried the guards' account. When his fellow detainees began a hunger strike in protest, two detainees who had been in neighbouring cells were deported. A campaign was launched, supported by several Spanish NGOs, to stop other potential witnesses being deported pending a proper investigation.<sup>107</sup>

- **Alpha Pam (28), 24/04/2013**  
 A Senegalese undocumented migrant, Pam was found dead of untreated tuberculosis at his house in Majorca, in a pool of his own blood. Pam, who had been seeking medical treatment for six months, had been refused on at least seven occasions because of his undocumented status. After it was clear that he was very ill, he was finally seen for five minutes for a check-up after signing a guarantee of payment slip. Pam's was the first death to be imputed to a new law which resulted in the withdrawal of the health cards of nearly 900,000 undocumented migrants on 1 September 2012, barring them from non-emergency health care. Médicos del Mundo subsequently launched a campaign, 'Right to care', mobilising health care professionals, doctors and ordinary citizens to defend the principle of universal health care.<sup>108</sup>



*Alpha Pam, a Senegalese undocumented migrant, died of untreated tuberculosis in Majorca.*

## SWEDEN

**SNAPSHOT:** The disbelieving and unsympathetic response to asylum seeking children in Sweden exacerbated their distress, according to many reports over a decade, and undocumented migrants suffer from poor health and limited access to health care.<sup>109</sup>

- **Unidentified boy, 04/2010**  
An unidentified boy committed suicide after being refused asylum. The youngster had become severely depressed and was being treated by the Child and Adult Psychiatry agencies. The doctor had recommended institutional care and a request had been made to the youth housing department but it did not reach the personnel in charge. The National Board of Health and Welfare recognised that failures within the system contributed to the boy's suicide.<sup>110</sup>
- **Cumar Yusuf Dayib (45), 12/11/2013**  
Dayib, a Somali asylum seeker, was shot and killed by a police officer at the Paradiset accommodation centre, in Geijersholm, Hagfors, which has a reputation for neglect. Residents said Dayib had been drunk and threatened others before the police came. One police officer claimed that Dayib came at him with a knife and ignored demands to stop, leaving no time to fire warning shots. Dayib was shot twice through the chest. The Migration Board refused to investigate the matter, saying that it was the responsibility of the police, who later announced an internal investigation.<sup>111</sup>

## SWITZERLAND

**SNAPSHOT:** Switzerland has come under fire for its isolation of asylum seekers in remote villages and their exclusion from communal facilities, provoking accusations of segregation and discrimination. Windowless military bunkers sleeping thirty, curfews and containers high in the mountains are among the reception facilities for asylum seekers.<sup>112</sup>

- **Joseph Ndukaku Chiakwa (29), 16/03/2010**  
A Nigerian asylum seeker, Chiakwa died at Zurich airport just after being strapped into a chair to be taken onto a charter deportation flight. A police statement on the death said that Chiakwa resisted being strapped to the seat, so that force had to be used. The public minister of Zurich closed the inquest into his death in 2012, stating that according to two autopsies Chiakwa had a serious heart condition and died of natural causes. Some claimed that the stress of deportation coupled with Chiakwa's hunger strike may have contributed to cardiac arrest, and Amnesty International called for independent monitoring of deportations.<sup>113</sup>
- **Oleg N. (28), 12/11/2012**  
A Russian asylum seeker committed suicide in the Klöten detention centre in Zurich. Oleg sought asylum in February 2012 on the basis of what he described as pressure placed upon him as a result of his sexuality. He said he had been imprisoned, violently beaten, and sent to a psychiatric centre. The trauma of sexual repression and persecution brought about psychological problems and he had undergone some therapy.<sup>114</sup>
- **Unidentified woman, 17/11/2012**  
An Eritrean asylum seeker committed suicide in a psychiatric hospital in Liestal, near Basel, apparently in fear of removal to Italy. She was due to be transferred there, with her three children, under the Dublin regulation, but the Bale-Campagne authorities reversed the decision on medical grounds, and say they let her know and did not understand why she had committed suicide. Her three children were placed with families in Belgium.<sup>115</sup>
- **Unidentified man, 19/11/2012**  
An Armenian asylum seeker committed suicide in a hospital in Winterthur.<sup>116</sup>
- **Unidentified man, 04/01/2013**  
A Kurdish asylum seeker committed suicide by hanging himself in a police cell in Zurich.<sup>117</sup>



*The Asylzentrum Lukmanier, an asylum centre in the Swiss Alps, is one example of the isolation asylum seekers face in Switzerland.*

- **Feras Farees Abdel Motaleeb (32), 14/03/2013**  
 An Iraqi asylum seeker of Palestinian origin died in the Waldau ‘minimal centre’. Abdel Motaleeb had been living in Switzerland since 2008 and had preliminary leave to remain, which allowed him to begin work at a bakery. On his return from a visit to family members in Sweden, he was housed in a transit centre and then transferred to the Waldau centre for unknown reasons. He was discovered with serious head injuries on the centre’s site, an isolated group of containers serving as a detention centre for ‘problematic’ asylum seekers (mainly men with mental health disorders and/ or alcohol and drug problems). The conditions are cramped and there are no resident staff.<sup>118</sup>
- **Moncef S. (25), 02/05/2013**  
 A Tunisian asylum seeker committed suicide in Zurich after having his asylum request refused and being threatened with imminent deportation. Border police arrested him in mid-March, and he attempted suicide for the first time in an airport prison. He was then taken to a psychiatric ward, but fled at the beginning of May. Moncef was found dead in the cellar of his flat in a week before his twenty-sixth birthday.<sup>119</sup>
- **Unidentified man (26), 29/10/2014**  
 An Eritrean asylum seeker hanged himself in his cell in the Aarau/ Argovie detention

centre in Lausanne rather than be returned to Italy under the Dublin regulation. He had travelled to Switzerland around two years earlier, but had voluntarily returned to Italy, where he had indefinite residency. He returned to Switzerland in 2014, saying that life was impossible in Italy.<sup>120</sup>

## UNITED KINGDOM

**SNAPSHOT:** Indefinite detention for migrants in prison-like conditions, casual racism and brutality and medical neglect are among the issues raised in the UK. Judges have on several occasions ruled that detention of severely mentally ill migrants amounted to inhuman and degrading treatment, and hunger strikes and protests are common. Widespread destitution among refused asylum seekers, including families with children, causes despair.<sup>121</sup>

- **Yurij Skruten, 01/2010**  
 A Ukrainian man was found hanged in a disused pub in Brentford. His body was decomposed so the circumstances of his death were difficult to establish. He had apparently been living rough after his asylum claim had been refused.<sup>122</sup>
- **Sergei (43), Tatiana and Stepan (19) Serykh, 07/03/2010**  
 Three Russian asylum seekers died after falling from the fifteenth floor of the Red Road complex in Glasgow, where asylum seekers were housed by the YMCA under contract to the UKBA. According to media reports, Serykh’s family had been granted refugee status in Canada but were refused citizenship. Following disputes with authorities, they left and travelled to Europe, eventually seeking asylum in the UK in 2007. The family apparently settled in Newham (London), when their asylum claims were refused in December 2008. They then moved to Glasgow in 2009. On 15 February the family were told that they were to be deported. They were also thought to be

- facing eviction from their flat. The family had warned of intentions to commit suicide. A fatal accident inquiry was ruled out.<sup>123</sup>
- **Eliud Nguli Nyenze (40), 15/04/2010**  
 A Kenyan man died at Oakington removal centre in Cambridge after apparently suffering a heart attack. Campaigners and other detainees alleged that he had been refused medical care. Following his death a disturbance erupted at Oakington and at least 60 people were transferred to prisons. In the days following the death the private company that runs the centre, G4S, was stripped of its British Safety Council award for its 'commitment to improving health and safety'. An inquest in October 2010 was told that Nyenze had collapsed in his room, and despite earlier complaining that he was unwell, had been refused paracetamol. An ambulance took twenty minutes to reach the centre and the nurse who went to treat him did not take a defibrillator with her.<sup>124</sup>
  - **Alan Rasoul Ahmed (21), 02/05/2010**  
 An Iraqi man was found hanged in asylum accommodation in Liverpool. Ahmed had become depressed over the final weeks of his life, he was homesick and wanted to return home to Iraq after his asylum claim was refused, but found himself in limbo and unable to return.<sup>125</sup>
  - **Osman Rasul Mohammed (27), 25/07/2010**  
 A Kurdish Iraqi asylum seeker jumped from the seventh floor of a Nottingham tower block. Mohammed had fled Iraq when his father and brother were killed, and had been in the UK since 2001. His asylum claim had been refused, but he was in the process of submitting a fresh claim. Meanwhile, he was destitute, unable to work and reliant on the generosity of friends, many of whom were in a similar situation, and on food parcels from Nottingham and Notts Refugee Forum (NNRF). Police officers had been talking to Mohammed when he placed his hand on his heart, looked up to the sky, and jumped.<sup>126</sup>
  - **Alexander Muchero (47), 19/08/10**  
 A Zimbabwean asylum seeker, Muchero died after stepping in front of a train at Widney Manor station, Solihull. An inquest concluded that he took his own life.<sup>127</sup>
  - **Jimmy Mubenga (46), 12/10/2010**  
 An Angolan deportee, Mubenga died of positional asphyxia during his deportation from Heathrow Airport. Mubenga, who had lived in the UK legally for seventeen years, had permanent residence, a wife and five British-born children, served a sentence for assault and was told he was to be deported to Angola. He is alleged to have become violent in the aircraft, and three G4S guards restrained him in his seat. Witnesses heard Mubenga saying 'I can't breathe' and 'They are killing me', and an inquest jury in 2013 found that he was unlawfully killed as a result of the use of unreasonable force. A jury at the Old Bailey, who were not privy to the inquest finding or the racist text messages exchanged between two of the security guards, acquitted the guards of manslaughter in December 2014.<sup>128</sup>
  - **Muhammad Shukat (47), 02/07/2011**  
 A Pakistani migrant. Shukat died in his cell in Colnbrook immigration removal centre (IRC) near London. Shukat became unwell in his cell and collapsed, and was groaning in agony and complaining of very bad chest pains. His cellmate said he raised the alarm immediately, and used the emergency button in their locked cell ten times in an effort to get help. Nursing staff and custody officers attended and carried out health checks but did not call emergency services immediately. Instead, Shukat was told he could see the doctor at 8am, by which point he had had a cardiac arrest. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.<sup>129</sup>
  - **Ianos Dragutan (31), 02/08/2011**  
 A Moldovan migrant, Dragutan committed suicide in Campsfield House IRC in Oxfordshire. He had served a three-month prison sentence in Wandsworth for possessing false documents. At Campsfield, he was

- informed that police wished to question him about a rape allegation dating back a number of years. He hanged himself on the day police came to arrest him at the centre.<sup>130</sup>
- **Bee Moyo (45), 12/03/2012**  
Moyo, a Zimbabwean asylum seeker, committed suicide in Ferham Park in Leeds. He had been refused asylum, and was unable to provide for his children financially. After an argument with his partner, he left his house saying that he intended to hang himself in nearby woods. Police later searched the park and found that Moyo had indeed hanged himself, but an open verdict on his death found that he may have intended to be found and resuscitated.<sup>131</sup>
  - **Bernard Hukwa, 09/07/2012**  
A Zimbabwean asylum seeker, Hukwa was found dead in the river Thames. He had been awaiting the processing of his asylum claim and was said to have been continuously worried that he was failing to provide for his family in Zimbabwe.<sup>132</sup>
  - **Prince Kwabena Ofosu (31), 30/10/2012**  
A Ghanaian migrant, Ofosu was found dead in his cell in Harmondsworth IRC, near London. Ghanaian detainees released a statement alleging Ofosu had been injured whilst being forcibly restrained, and that he had been left naked in a cell without heating. Detainees also pointed to poor conditions and inadequate health care. A post-mortem was said to have found no evidence of violence.<sup>133</sup>
  - **Khalid Shahzad (52), 30/03/2013**  
A Pakistani migrant, Shahzad died on a train to Manchester shortly after being released from Colnbrook IRC following three months detention there. He was judged unfit to be detained due to poor health, including heart disease, thrombosis and diabetes, after he collapsed, but was left to get home alone when he was released the following day. Fellow detainees described constant breathing difficulties throughout his detention, and his family stated that a stent had been fitted to help his heart and that he had had several hospital stays, the latest four days before his death.<sup>134</sup>
  - **Yousef Shokri-Gharab (34), 20/06/2013**  
An Iranian asylum seeker, Shokri-Gharab committed suicide in a car park and was pronounced dead at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital. He had sought asylum in Britain in January 2013, but had had his claim rejected by the Home Office, and was awaiting a tribunal appeal. Shokri-Gharab suffered from a serious mental illness, had expressed suicidal intentions and had a history of self-harming (including overdoses of medication, banging his head against a wall, and cutting himself). He was given unescorted leave from Windsor House, where he was staying because of his history of drug addiction, and was found dead of an overdose of heroin a few days later.<sup>135</sup>
  - **Tahir Mehmood (43), 26/07/2013**  
A Pakistani migrant, Mehmood was found dead in Pennine House, a short-term holding facility near Manchester airport, five days after being detained at the centre for overstaying his visa. Relatives said he was looking forward to returning to his family in Pakistan, but fellow inmates reportedly said he did not want to go back and had complained of maltreatment at the hands of staff. He was found collapsed at the centre. A post-mortem found he died of ischaemic heart disease.<sup>136</sup>
  - **Mohamoud Ali (36), 01/02/2014**  
An undocumented Somali migrant, Ali was found dead in his cell in the G4S-run HMP Parc prison in Bridgend. The wrong family was notified of his death, and his own family only heard about his death much later. No information as to the cause of death has been made available.<sup>137</sup>
  - **Leonovid Isufaj (27), 27/02/2014**  
An Albanian migrant, Isufaj committed suicide off the coast of Harwich during his deportation to the Netherlands. Two Albanian men, Isufaj and another, allegedly jumped from a Stena Britannica ferry during

their deportation in what is believed to be a suicide attempt. The body of Isufaj was found washed up on Felixstowe beach on 20 March. No information is available on what happened to the second man.<sup>138</sup>

- **Christine Case (40), 30/03/2014**

A Jamaican migrant, Case died in the Yarl's Wood IRC, Bedfordshire, of a blockage in her lungs. She was taken to the centre on 20 March because of problems with her immigration status, and was due to be deported to Jamaica. The inquest is ongoing, but the shadow home secretary, Yvette Cooper, has asked the government to respond to accusations that Case was denied medical assistance prior to her death.<sup>139</sup>

- **Bruno Dos Santos (23), 04/06/2014**

An African stateless asylum seeker, Dos Santos was found dead in his cell in HMP The Verne on the Isle of Portland in Dorset. His statelessness meant he could not be sent back to his country of origin, and he had a child in Britain, but he had been detained for a long time. Prison officers believe that he died of natural causes; however, they note that he died a sudden death.<sup>140</sup>

- **Rubel Ahmed (26), 05/09/2014**

A Bangladeshi man, Ahmed died in Morton Hall IRC in Lincolnshire. At the time of writing, there are very few details of Ahmed's death. Fellow detainees say that he had been in pain for some time and had been calling for help, but Ahmed's family say they were told



*Rubel Ahmed, a Bangladeshi man, died in Morton Hall IRC in Lincolnshire in September 2014.*

by the Home Office that he had committed suicide. Ahmed's family only found out about his death from his solicitor several hours later, after a fellow detainee called the solicitor.<sup>141</sup>

## Notes

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## FURTHER INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

There are a large number of refugee, migrant support and human rights organisations in the European countries covered in this report – too many for us to list. But the following transnational groups will be able to provide information and contact details for national organisations in each country working in the refugee and migration field:

### **Amnesty International (London office)**

Tel: +44 (0)20 7033 1500  
[sct@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:sct@amnesty.org.uk)  
<http://www.amnesty.org.uk>

### **Amnesty International EU**

Tel: +32 (0)2 548 27 73  
[mpatterson@amnesty.eu](mailto:mpatterson@amnesty.eu)  
<http://www.amnesty.eu>

### **Doctors of the World London office**

Tel: +44 (0)20 7167 5789  
<http://doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/>

### **Médecins du Monde Paris HQ**

Telephone +33(0)1 44 92 15 15  
<http://www.medecinsdumonde.org/>

### **Doctors without Borders (Médecins sans Frontières)**

Tel: +44 (0)20 7404 6600  
<http://www.msf.org.uk/>

### **European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)**

Tel: +32 (0)2 234 3800  
[ecre@ecre.org](mailto:ecre@ecre.org)  
<http://www.ecre.org/>

### **European Network Against Racism (ENAR)**

Tel: + 32 (0)2 229 35 70  
[info@enar-eu.org](mailto:info@enar-eu.org)  
<http://www.enar-eu.org/>

### **Migreurop**

CICP, 21ter rue Voltaire F-75011 Paris  
<http://www.migreurop.org/>

### **Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)**

Tel: +32 (0)2 210 17 80  
[info@picum.org](mailto:info@picum.org)  
<http://picum.org/>

### **UNITED for Intercultural Action (European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees)**

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Design: Sujata Aurora