

Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh
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Call of Support for a Fax Campaign



How is it possible that a human being can lose his life in a jail cell, burned alive in a so-called 'security tract', and the circumstances regarding his death remain a mystery twenty months later? The unanswered questions regarding Oury Jalloh's death are as numerous as they are shocking. Even more unfathomable, however, is the complete lack of clarification on the part of the State Prosecutor and the obstructions of the District Court of Dessau.

On the 7th of January, 2006, Oury Jalloh was taken into 'protective detention' by the Dessau Police, where he died an excruciating death; burned alive while 'fixed' at his hands and feet to the wall and floor. The chief police inspector on-duty did not respond to the noises coming from the intercommunication system. On two separate occasions he simply turned off the fire alarm. His assertion that the fire alarm was previously damaged proved to be untrue.

Directly after the death of Oury Jalloh, the police immediately began to speak of 'suicide'. Until today many of the numerous ambiguities which cast serious doubt on the official version of a suicide have yet to be investigated. How can a person who is tied at his hands and feet to a fire-proof mattress set himself on fire? Why does a lighter suddenly appear in an inventory list of the 11th of January and not in the first list which was made one day before? How could Oury Jalloh even have a lighter in his pocket when the police officer responsible for his body search claims that he was thoroughly searched and all other items had already been removed from his pockets? Why does the official autopsy report exclude injuries (a broken nose, broken middle ear and other injuries to the head) which were found in a second, privately financed autopsy?

On the 6th of May, 2005, the State Prosecutor of Dessau formally filed charges against two police officers, one for bodily harm resulting in death and the other for negligent homicide. All other possibilities have been excluded from the State Prosecutor's accusation. The District Court of Dessau has still not accepted to take on the case. The responsible police and the doctor who declared Oury Jalloh fit for detention are still carrying out their work. On the 17th of October, 2005—five and a half months following the submission of the indictment by the State Prosecutor—the District Court of Dessau ordered additional investigations to take place before it decides whether or not the case will be accepted and a trial will take place.

A similar delay tactic can also be observed in the District Court's failure to authorize the admission of Oury Jalloh's parents as co-claimants; in spite of the fact that the respective applications were submitted on 8 March 2005 for the mother, Mariama Djombo Diallo, and on 30 September 2005 for the father. Despite numerous reminders from the legal representatives of the Jalloh family, until today the court has not found it necessary to decide whether or not to recognize the parents as co-claimants. There is clearly no valid reason for these delay tactics of the District Court. Consequently, serious suspicion is being raised that critical and uncomfortable legal proceedings which include both the access of an informed public and a comprehensive clarification should be hindered.

In order to see that a trial will take place—including the necessary critical precision, transparency and consequences—resolute public pressure is needed NOW! With this fax campaign, we want to confront the tendency in this society to be silent and forget; we want to make clear to the District Court of Dessau that the scandalous hindrance of the clarification regarding Oury Jalloh's death will no longer be accepted; and we want to let those responsible know that there is widening and resolute protest that demand clarification regarding the death of Oury Jalloh.

Help make possible that there is finally a date set for the court proceedings, the admission of the parents as co-claimants and a clarification regarding the circumstances of Oury Jalloh's death!

Please send the accompanying fax letter to the District Court of Dessau. As we need to keep track of the success of this fax campaign, we ask every person or organisation to send us a brief e-mail informing us that you have sent the fax. E-mails can be sent to: initiative-ouryjalloh@so36.net

Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh, Berlin, August 2006

Sender:

To:

Judge Steinhoff
District Court of Dessau
Willi-Lohmann-Str. 29
06844 Dessau
Fax: 0340-2021430

Re: Clarification of the Death of Oury Jalloh

Honorable Judge Steinhoff,

The way in which you and other responsible authorities are dealing with the case of Oury Jalloh's death is not only scandalous—it also provokes deep mistrust and anger.

With the hasty presumption that it is a case of suicide, an attempt has been made to obstruct the clarification as to the death of Oury Jalloh. Only thanks of the initiative of a few friends of the now deceased Mr. Jalloh has this dreadful incident has not been forgotten.

The few facts which have been made available to the public seriously put in doubt the official version of a suicide. Especially the obstruction of court proceedings—which continues even until today—create the impression that a clarification of the circumstances surrounding Oury Jalloh's death is not in the interest of the authorities. Even more mistrust is added when we see that two years ago another man died in the very same cell without the causes of his death being fully clarified.

Also, the persecution of Mouctar Bah, a close friend of Oury Jalloh, and the privation of his means of existence through the seizure of his commercial licence make it more than clear that the voices who demand clarification and justice should be silenced.

Furthermore, from the very beginning your court is doing everything in its power to obstruct public interest in the clarification of the case. In this manner, until today the parents of Oury Jalloh have still not been authorized as co-claimants in the case, effectively excluding them from the possibility of legal representation as well as their participation in any future hearings.

Additionally, six months after the fact that the State Prosecutor lodged a formal allegation in May of last year, did your court took ordered additional investigations to take place. Now nine months later and these investigations have still not been closed. Instead, increasingly more and more legal proceedings ('libel', 'incitement of the people', 'violation of right of assembly law', 'resisting a police officer', etc.) are being brought against those who actively engage themselves in demanding clarification and justice regarding the death of Oury Jalloh.

Subsequently, I/We direct the following demands to your court:

- A foreseeable date for the opening of court proceedings
- The admission of Oury Jalloh's parents as co-claimants
- Public access and transparency for all court proceedings

Signature

Date