

Algerian immigrant killed by French police while being deported

Athiyan Silva
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Abdelhak Goradia, a 51-year-old Algerian undocumented immigrant and father of a 6 year old child, died on August 21 while being forcibly transferred toward Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport for deportation.

Goradia had lived in France since 1996, having arrived with a tourist visa and remained in France after its expiration date. He was unable to get a permanent visa and was arrested by police this summer.

He was imprisoned in the brutal detention center (Administrative Retention Centre, CRA) in Vincennes near Paris on August 12 and served with the expulsion order. On August 16, he resisted the first attempt by the police to expel him. He died while being forcefully transferred to the airport by the notorious UNESI (National Unit for Escort, Support and Intervention) unit.

Police falsely claimed Goradia, who was asthmatic, died of a heart attack. This claim was contradicted by the autopsy report, which concludes that the cause of death was "asphyxia due to gastric regurgitation."

Witnesses and his family members also rejected police claims. Goradia's cousin, who saw his body, told the media: "He had facial injuries but we could not see the rest of the body because it was hidden."

Another witness who was in the detention center with Goradia said the killing took place "... when we were doing prayers at 18h. As soon as we finished, he came down allegedly because he had a visit. In the local reception area, the cops beat him. They put a helmet and handcuffs on him and bound his legs. The cops knew he was going to refuse, and then they used force with him."

After Goradia's death, police publicly discussed Goradia's record with the media, including convictions for credit card fraud, in a cynical attempt to blacken his

character and implicitly justify the police killing.

In European Union countries, including France, many thousands of immigrants and asylum seekers are treated like animals and forcibly expelled every year. A recent Amnesty International report said: "Human rights groups, magistrates associations and unions which assists refugees and asylum-seekers at frontier areas, both published reports which describe police ill-treatment (blows, beatings with batons, tight handcuffing, racial insults) at the holding area at Roissy-Charles de Gaulle airport."

In France, since 2003 four immigrants and asylum seekers have died during deportation. Argentinean national Ricardo Barrientos, Ethiopian national Miriame Getu Hagos, Tunisian national Salem Souli and Algerian national Abdelhak Goradia died amid police violence. Last year, 36,822 immigrants were deported from France.

Every year, the number of deportations rises. At the same time, many immigrants continue to risk their lives to reach European shores aboard primitive boats. Over the last two decades, tens of thousands of people have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea. Most are from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. These immigrants are victims of imperialist war, misery, and repression in their home countries.

Since the Stalinist dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the escalating wars and interventions of imperialist powers have claimed millions of lives and turned millions into refugees in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. French imperialism has joined these wars to re-divide and recolonize the world, waging wars in Syria, Mali, the Central African Republic, Libya, and now in Iraq. However, Paris employs the most brutal methods to repress refugees fleeing the social catastrophes created by these wars.

In Europe, including France, many undocumented immigrants work as virtual slaves in restaurants, small shops, or cleaning and construction works in order to live. Many bosses cheat these workers, because they cannot go to the police to complain. Some workers work more than 250 hours per month to earn only 1200 euros without a pay sheet and without social benefits to pay rent.

As the political and social crisis has intensified, the issue of immigration has come to the fore. In an irrefutable sign of its bankrupt and reactionary character, the entire capitalist political establishment in Europe is denouncing and attacking immigrants, using them as scapegoats to poison the political atmosphere and divide the working class. The immigration policy of the so-called “Socialist” government of President François Hollande is even more brutal than that of the previous conservative government of President Nicolas Sarkozy.

Undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers live under constant threat of deportation. Amnesty International reported that about 20,000 Roma families were expelled from their makeshift homes in 2013. In May 2014, police forcibly evicted nearly 700 immigrants and asylum seekers from makeshift camps in Calais.

Former Interior Minister and current Prime Minister Manuel Valls infamously denounced the Roma people in racist terms for being “incapable of assimilating” into French society” to justify his government’s policy of mass deportations of the Roma. Such comments demonstrate the reactionary character of the ruling Socialist Party (PS), which is moving towards the positions of France’s neo-fascist National Front (FN).

The media and pseudo-left parties such as the New Anti-capitalist Party are silent on the PS’ campaign against immigrants, while they continue to cynically promote French imperialism’s wars as “humanitarian” interventions .



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