

Top French policeman investigating Charlie Hebdo shooting found dead

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Commissioner Helric Fredou, second in command of the French Judicial Police in the town of Limoges, was shot dead only hours after the terrorist attack on *Charlie Hebdo* last Wednesday.

Fredou was part of the team investigating the *Charlie Hebdo* case. The gunmen who attacked *Charlie Hebdo*, Saïd and Cherif Kouachi, had received their high school education in the Limousin region around Limoges.

On the evening of the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings, Fredou dispatched a team of police officials under his jurisdiction to interview the relatives of one of the *Charlie Hebdo* victims and waited for the return of his team for a debriefing.

Immediately after the police debriefing, he began preparing his report, staying late at police headquarters to write it up. A colleague found him shot dead at 1 a.m. on Thursday morning, and the report he was writing was never found.

Pascal Cayla of the national police union “Alliance” said, “We are all in shock. He was very human and close to people.”

Fredou was 44 years old and single. A native of Limoges, he began his career in 1997 as a police officer at the regional office of the judicial police of Versailles, before returning to Limoges. In 2007, he became commissioner after two years at the school of Saint-Cyr Mont-Dore, before being appointed head of security for the Haute-Vienne department. In September 2010, he began serving as commissioner in the city of Cherbourg, before returning to Limoges in August 2012 to be appointed deputy director of the regional police service.

Police spokesmen claim that it was suicide and that he was shot with his own service revolver. In the initial reports on Fredou’s death, the Limoges police

declared, “The reasons for his action are currently unknown.”

Subsequent reports, however, quoted police spokesmen as saying that Fredou was “depressed and close to burnout.” An autopsy was performed at the University Hospital of Limoges confirming the suicide. French police said that no connection could be made to the *Charlie Hebdo* case.

A year earlier, Fredou himself apparently discovered the third in command of the Limoges Judicial Police dead in similar circumstances. This death was also ruled a suicide.

Oddly, the French media has buried the story of Fredou’s death. Only three or four articles have appeared in the French press about his death, all from small regional papers and TV except a short piece in *Le Parisien*. In contrast, dozens of articles have appeared on the subject in the English, German, and Turkish language media, many of which described the circumstances of Fredou’s death as suspicious.



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