

DoucheFLUX and the Belgian League of Human Rights call for a serious and independent investigation into the death of Ilyes Abbedou in a police station.



Thursday 10 June 2021, the Belgian League of Human Rights (LDH) is filing a civil action in the case of the death of Ilyes Abbedou, a young man of Algerian nationality who died in a police station in January 2021 in unclear circumstances. DoucheFLUX is joining the civil action. The two associations are demanding justice for Ilyes and highlight the international obligation for an independent and impartial investigation into any death that occurs in police custody.

On 19 January 2021, after his arrest on suspicion of stealing a jacket, Ilyes Abbedou was found dead in his cell in a police station in the Bruxelles-Capitale-Ixelles police zone. Although the prosecution shared the first findings of the autopsy, which revealed 'no indication of violence' and 'no sign of third-party involvement', the sequence of events and the cause of Ilyes' death are still unknown.

Ilyes was of Algerian nationality, and did not have a Belgian residence permit.

He was 29 years old and had no apparent health problems.

He was a regular visitor to DoucheFLUX, an organisation that wants to combat the exclusion of people living in precarious circumstances, whether homeless or in poor housing, documented or otherwise, wherever they are from, and offers them essential services and activities.

"We stand alongside Ilyes' family and loved ones", says Benjamin Brooke, codirector of DoucheFLUX. As an organisation that works on the ground, the organization is concerned about the current context which fuels the stigmatisation and dehumanisation of homeless people as well as the increasing criminalisation of their presence on the streets. "Ilyes' death in a police station, and the lack of transparency around the events leading to his death, create a climate of fear and tension that adds to the daily stress of life on the streets. Homeless people without a residence permit suffer greatly from this climate and live in a state of constant anxiety", Brooke adds.

"Being undocumented and homeless, Ilyes Abbedou was in a very vulnerable situation, which is why the League of Human Rights has decided to file a civil action suit," explains Olivia Venet, president of the League of Human Rights. "This tragedy is far from being an isolated case. Recently, there have also been others (Ibrahima Barrie, Adil Charrot, Mehdi Bouda...) who have also died following contact with the police. In such circumstances, international law requires that independent and impartial investigations be carried out thoroughly, and, where appropriate, that those responsible be punished."

Both organizations call for a thorough investigation to be conducted independently and impartially to uncover the full circumstances of this tragedy. DoucheFLUX also calls on citizens who would like to support this action to contribute financially and help cover the legal costs. For more information about this call for financial support, please go to: <https://doucheflux.be/notre-action/plaidoyer/justice-pour-ilyes/?lang=en>

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