

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Media Advisory

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## **France: The search for justice: Victims of police brutality at the Paris press conference**

### **Daniel Francois, lawyer, who himself was a victim of police ill-treatment in the course of his work in 2002**

On 31 December 2002, Daniel Francois, was asked to assist a 17-year-old boy being held in police custody in Aulnay-sous-Bois (Seine-Saint-Denis). Noting lesions on the boy's face, the lawyer told the duty officer that he wished to register allegations that his client had been subjected to acts of violence and requested a medical examination, but his attempts were frustrated. He was arrested and placed in police custody on charges of *outrage et rébellion*. Daniel Francois was held for 13 hours and was subjected to an alcohol test despite there being no evidence that he had been drinking.

### **Virginie Huset, widow of Sydney Manoka Nzeza**

Sydney Manoka Nzeza, a young amateur boxer of Zairean origin, died in custody on 6 November 1998, at Tourcoing (Nord), after involvement in a violent arrest. An autopsy concluded that the death had been caused by "a process of asphyxia due to compression of the thorax". On 5 July 2000, two officers were convicted of a manslaughter charge and sentenced to a nominal, seven-month suspended prison term. They and three others were acquitted of failing to assist a person at risk. The family of the victim and the civil parties protested against the lightness of the sentence. The lawyer for the family stated that an appeal would be brought. However, in March 2001 the Court of Appeal of Douai upheld the original suspended prison sentences.

### **Karim Latifi, a French IT consultant**

On 22 February 2002, Karim Latifi was reportedly involved in an altercation with police officers in Paris, in which he was severely assaulted and racially abused by police officers. During the car journey to the police station he was allegedly subjected to continued racial abuse. He was held in the police station for 15 minutes, after which a police lieutenant, who had not been involved in the incident, told him no charges were being brought against him and he was released. After he lodged a complaint and his complaint was archived, Karim Latifi wrote, in September 2003, to the president of the bar of Paris to bring the matter to his attention. At the time of writing the inquiry was ongoing.

**For more information on the cases, see:** *France: The Search for Justice: The effective impunity of law enforcement officers in cases of shootings, deaths in custody or torture and ill-treatment*  
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR210012005>.

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566  
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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