

Russian Federation – Investigation and prosecution of the racist murder of Lamsar Samba Sell

Appeal Case
14 November 2006

Lamsar Samba Sell, a 28-year-old student from Senegal, was shot dead in the early morning of 7 April 2006 in St Petersburg. A gunman opened fire on a group of foreign students as they left a weekly gathering of inter-cultural friendship between Russians and foreigners. Lamsar Samba Sell was reported to have been shot in the back. An air rifle was found abandoned nearby emblazoned with a swastika, although it was not thought to be the weapon used to murder the student. A criminal investigation was immediately opened under Article 105 part 2 (murder motivated by racial hatred) and an arrest warrant for a suspect was issued on 11 April.

Subsequently, the St. Petersburg authorities reportedly detained five suspects, but the key suspect was reportedly killed during arrest. According to information received from the city procuracy, the case is still at the preliminary investigation stage.

Lamsar Samba Sell had taken part in anti-racism initiatives such as giving lessons in secondary schools on African culture and tolerance.

Please write letters to the Russian authorities,

- expressing concern about the many reports of allegedly racially motivated killings of foreign students in the Russian Federation;
- welcoming statements by Russian law enforcement officials that acknowledge the problem of racism and intolerance in the Russian Federation, including in Lamsar Samba Sell's case;
- welcoming efforts by law enforcement officials to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators in this murder but expressing concern that many more attacks may go unreported as many foreigners and members of ethnic minorities who become victims of a crime lack confidence in the justice system and in law enforcement officials to help them;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that the murder of Lamsar Samba Sell be effectively and thoroughly investigated and prosecuted;
- urging the authorities to address deficiencies in the investigation and prosecution of racist attacks, including through the development of clear guidelines and training for police, procurators and judges who deal with such cases.

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Please send your letters to:

Governor of St Petersburg

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Please send copies of your letters to:

President of the Russian Federation

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Please send copies as well to the Russian embassy in your country.
