



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
 RÉSEAU EURO-MEDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
 الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان



European Network Against Racism
 Réseau européen contre le racisme
 Europäische Netz gegen Rassismus

migreurop

obs

a joint programme
 OMCT **fidh**
 The Observatory
 for the Protection
 of Human Rights Defenders

PICUM

PLATFORM FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON
 UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS



fi FRONT LINE DEFENDERS

5 June 2012

- PRESS RELEASE -

CYPRUS: FALSE ACCUSATION CONFIRMED

JUDGE DROPS ALL CHARGES AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER DOROS POLYCARPOU

On 5 June 2012, Doros Polycarpou, the Executive Director of Cypriot anti-racist NGO KISA, was acquitted of the charge of rioting during the 2010 Rainbow Festival in Larnaca. This decision is final and is not open for appeal. The judge found the testimonies of the prosecution witnesses to be not credible.

This ruling confirms the view of a wide coalition of international NGOs: the accusations were manifestly false and represented only the most recent in a series of attempts by the Cypriot authorities to silence KISA, an organisation that has been fighting xenophobia and racism in Cyprus for 14 years. We regret the charges were not withdrawn before such a lengthy trial took place.

We deplore that, despite repeated requests to the Attorney General and the Council of Ministers, no independent investigation was carried out about the events occurred in Larnaca in 2010, in particular with respect to the alleged failure of police to protect the Rainbow Festival's participants. More than a year and a half later, no one has been charged with the crimes which resulted in serious injuries and hospitalisation of people that participated in the Festival. The evidence points to the fact that attackers were motivated by xenophobia and racism.

This case is emblematic of the vigilance needed to confront this growing phenomenon in Europe and to support those defending the rights of refugees and migrants. Cyprus is about to take over the EU Presidency in July. It announces it will address the issue of the integration of migrants and the Common European Asylum System as priorities. We recommend that the Cyprus government ensures a conducive environment in which NGOs and other human rights defenders can carry out their mission.

We urge the Cypriot authorities to use the occasion of Doros Polycarpou's acquittal to mark the beginning of new cooperation between the Cyprus state and human rights defenders.

Signatories

European Association for Human Rights/ Association Européenne des droits l'Homme (AEDH)

Euro-Mediterranean Network for Human Rights

European Network Against Racism

Fahamu Refugee Legal Aid Programme

Front Line Defenders

Migreurop

Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants