7 January 2015 – Today marks the 10th anniversary of the death of Sierra Leonean asylum seeker Oury Jalloh.

Oury Jalloh was a 37 years old father who was burned to death in a police detention cell in Dessau, Germany, on 7 January 2005.

The circumstances of Oury Jalloh’s death have been subject to several investigations. According to the official account, while having had his hands and feet tied to the wall and floor by law-enforcement officers, Jalloh was supposedly able to set fire to the fireproof mattress he was lying on.

Oury Jalloh’s family and friends, together with activists, founded the association Initiative Oury Jalloh. Initiative Oury Jalloh has repeatedly called for independent investigations of the circumstances of his death. Despite that independent investigators have found that it would have been impossible for Oury Jalloh to set fire to himself, the Federal Court of Magdeburg did not establish murder and merely sentenced the police officer in charge to a 10.800 EUR fine.

The same police officer had deliberately ignored the initial fire alarm and Oury Jalloh’s screams for help, which had been recorded in an acoustically observed detention cell. The independent fire report indicated that there might have been an external fire accelerator involved. Moreover, a second autopsy demanded by Initiative Oury Jalloh demonstrated injuries to the nose bone that went undetected in the first autopsy, thus indicating a beating prior to his death.

We, the European Network for People of African Descent (ENPAD), are calling for the case of Oury Jalloh to be re-opened with adequate means for a fair and independent investigation into the death of Oury Jalloh. We also call upon the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union to reform excessively restrictive asylum laws and practices that makes it very hard to seek asylum in Germany and other European countries, encourages irregular migration, gives rise to police brutality and in all too many cases even death.

Signing parties:

- Plataforma Gueto - Portugal
- ISD - Initiative of Black People in Germany
- nederland wordt beter - the Netherlands
- Zwarte Piet Niet - the Netherlands
- Narrative Eye – UK
- PAWLO Germany (Pan-African Women’s Liberation Organization)
- Ebony Organization, Arts and Human Rights
- AUADS; African Union African Diaspora sixth Region Germany
- AK Panafrikanismus - Panafricanism Working Group Germany
- FRN: Fight Racism Now - Sweden
- AkiDwA - National network for migrant women in Ireland
- New Urban Collective - the Netherlands
- ADYNE; African Diaspora youth Network in Europe
- Raad Van de Afrikaanse Gemeenschappen in Europa - Belgium