

MOVEMENT FOR THE RENAISSANCE OF NORTHERN EPIRUS

OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

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Warsaw – Poland

Working session 10: Rule of law I, including:

- Independence of the judiciary
- Democratic law-making
- Ensuring equal enjoyment of rights and equal participation in political and public life

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On April 28, 2019, six months had passed since the murder of Constantinos Katsifas in the Greek minority village of Vouliarates, Argyrokastro by the Albanian Police Special Forces Unit "Renea". On that day the extension of the deadline for the Albanian authorities to provide the findings regarding the death of the 35-year-old Greek, according to the Albanian law, expired.

It is now close to a year since the Albanian police killed a member of the National Greek Minority who only wanted to exercise his rights in his ancestral land, but unfortunately no official report has been issued by Albanian justice, thus refusing to shed light on the case. Why?

We will also never forget the murder of Aristotelis Goumas on August 12, 2010 in Himara by Albanian nationalists, because the victim wanted to speak his mother tongue, Greek, in his home country.

The Albanian justice has released the accomplices of the murder on restricted terms, while the driver of the car that repeatedly run over the body of Aristotelis Goumas was sentenced to just 12 years in prison, but did not spend one day in prison.

It is also noteworthy that the victim's family was not called on to court and was not formally informed of the decision.

Members of the Greek National Minority in Albania face serious problems with the country's justice, particularly regarding property issues.

Specifically, the Albanian courts validate even low-quality falsified documents from the Ottoman Empire or the Zogu Monarchy era that Albanian violators use in order to strip the Greeks of their land in Northern Epirus.

This phenomenon has existed for decades in most villages and especially the municipality of Finiki. The courts have showed shocking prejudgement in their decisions, making the members of the Greek minority lose their trust to the Albanian justice system altogether.

The most important case of property encroachment backed by clearly erroneous court decisions is the case of the village of Kostari, which has been going on since 2002.