

Yannis Maggos

The case of Vassilios Maggos



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The Case of Vassilis Maggos

Yannis Maggos

My name is Yannis Maggos, I am the father of Vassilios Maggos, who was murderously beaten by police officers of the Ministry of Citizen Protection on 14 June 2020 resulting to his death. The event took place in front of the courthouse in Volos, Greece.

We have collected incontrovertible documents that prove that he was beaten deliberately because he was targeted for his political activities: videos, photographs, the police incident book, the hospital documents, the conclusion of the Ombudsman (28/5/2021), the decision (no. 17/2023) of the Prosecutor of the Larissa Court of Appeal, which came as a result of a second appeal that we filed, accepting that he was beaten and tortured to the degree of a felony.

The policemen, whom I consider to be the natural perpetrators and whose names are known to all of us, took the law into their own hands instead of the official institutions and beat and tortured our child because of his participation in the march of 13 June 2020 and in the collectives, as it is written in the police report. If they had acted in accordance with the law, if they had not brutally violated his dignity and human rights, our child would still be alive today. The incident book of 14 June 2020 states that nothing was done to him. The complainants beat up our child unjustifiably and without cause. According to the decision of the prosecutor of the Larissa Court of Appeal: “The above facts have been proven beyond doubt...”

This is a political trial: From the documents we have collected it is clear that all this happened because he was targeted for his political activities. Ombudsman: “...with the exception of the apologetic memorandum of the head of the competent police department, all the other police officers under investigation are allegedly aware of his participation in the incidents of the previous day, as well as of his postings on anti-authoritarian websites”.

But the prosecutor played down the case. He prosecuted the case ex officio, without calling the eyewitnesses... He didn't study the case and doesn't know the facts. He did not take into account the Incident Book and ignored the Public Prosecutor's Conclusion issued on 28 May 2021, while the indictment was issued on 24 September 2021. He failed to bring these two important documents to the attention of the Appeal Prosecutor. Page 111 of the order of the Appeal Prosecutor of Larissa states: "... After that it becomes clear that a preliminary investigation was ordered by the prosecutor of Volos, but it was not carried out legally (Article 244 of the Code of Criminal Procedure)".

In the Ombudsman's conclusion (dated 28.5.2021), which condemns the police officers, the following is stated about the conclusion of the administrative investigation: "... The Ombudsman finds that the conclusion reached by the Acting Public Prosecutor in the above-mentioned report is insufficiently substantiated due to the deficiencies found in the disciplinary review, which leaves several questions and issues unanswered and therefore affects the reasoning of the above-mentioned report".

Page 109 of the Prosecutor's Office in Larisa reads:

"Brigadier General K., who conducted the administrative investigation, performed his duties (with regard to the collection of investigative material) inadequately until 23.2.2021 (date of the report of the administrative investigation), which, due to his actions and omissions, resulted in the collusion of the criminal activity of the police officers under investigation...".

As for the administrative inquiry, it has become a farce. It is obvious that the purpose of the findings of the Administrative Inquiry is to cover up the responsibility of the accused police officers. The Police Brigadier General responsible for the findings should be brought to justice. I have been shouting for a long time: "No to cover-up and impunity".

The reason for opening an administrative investigation was not the beating of our child, but, as the Ombudsman points out, it was the statements our child made publicly on 16 June 2020, when he was in hospital, and which were republished on social media on the day of his death. Until then, the authorities remained indifferent and continue to mock us. It is clear that these are crimes.

The prosecution was based only on the evidence gathered during the investigation and did not take into account the evidence we gathered ourselves in our complaint. The purpose is to treat the accused police officers more favourably. It is incomprehensible to me that we parents are being deprived by the prosecution of our right to be involved in the decision on our complaint. We come to court without the right to be defended by our lawyers. At the last court hearing on 13 March 2023, my wife, our lawyer and I were not allowed to enter the courtroom. I was even challenged, beaten, and thrown to the ground, right next to the place where they murderously beat our child. At every trial, we see exactly the same ill-conceived act: the police department prohibits the entry of citizens and fills the courtroom from the back door with police officers and security guards.

The context of the case

We can read from the precise complaint that he [Vasilios Maggos] eloquently made: “On Saturday, 13 June 2020, a large rally was held against the burning of waste by Lafarge, that is, against the cancer and death that hangs over our city and that we all breathe every day, as the city's atmosphere constantly stinks of burnt plastic”. What do we see in this complaint? A young man who is publicly concerned, worried and anxious about the present and future of the city of Volos.

13 June 2020: On the one hand, there is a huge march from the city of Volos to the Lafarge cement factory. On the other hand, there is a police force, and in particular a police chief, who failed miserably in this operation. They did not have the capacity to deal with it. The director deployed his forces in a totally inappropriate and defiant manner, inside the private premises of Lafarge, as if they were the company's private army. And who is Lafarge? He has been convicted in America for financing terrorism in Syria and is being prosecuted by the French state for crimes against humanity. The repression was terrifying. They beat the demonstrators, threw people into the sea, chased the citizens into the city of Volos and filled the area around the Volos hospital with chemicals, creating a climate of terror in the city.

On 13 and 14 June 2020, the Magnesia police did not know what they were doing. On 14 June 2020, the police did what they wanted to do. There were no written orders as

to how they should behave in front of the courthouse at a rally they knew in advance would take place.

The incident – 14 June 2020: Before the eyes of justice

The time was approaching 4 p.m. The proceedings had just ended and the detainee (arrested during the march the day before) was leaving the court accompanied by police officers.

I read from our child's complaint: "I, on Sunday (meaning 14 June 2020), was not with the assembled crowd. I ran towards the police to protest, because that's how I felt at that moment, I was suffocated by my righteousness, I said from inside, look at us, not only are they polluting the air with cancer, we are also being mercilessly beaten by their minions with chemicals, flash bangs and batons, and we are being dragged in chains to the courts. But I didn't even get to the security guards". His protest for a clean environment and solidarity with the arrested man was the last and highest act of his life.

"A platoon of the Crime Prevention and Suppression Squad and a platoon of the Riot Control Unit specifically targeted me because they know me, came running towards me and started beating me unprovoked, murderously, inhumanely and mercilessly. They beat me until I couldn't breathe, because I was badly beaten in my ribs, I screamed at them, they didn't care. They handcuffed me and took me away, calling me by my surname".

The description is accurate. His ribs were breaking one by one, his soul was being torn to pieces, he was screaming that he was in pain, that he couldn't breathe, that he couldn't protect himself by lying down, and they were beating him mercilessly. This is torture.

Tragic irony, about a month ago Floyd was murdered by police officers in the United States of America and as he was dying he screamed that he couldn't breathe. This shocked our child. How could he have known, how could we, his parents, have known, that a month later he would experience the same thing in front of the court in Volos. A professional policeman does not hit someone who is down and defenseless unless he

has an intention to do so. And here he was beaten by four men, with intent.



14.6.2020. Outside Volo's courts (source: Reporters United)

The appeal prosecutor of Larissa: “The aforementioned incidents emerged beyond any doubt from the careful examination of the audiovisual material, but also the photographic material, from the testimonies of the lawyer George T., as well as the other eyewitnesses”. And the Ombudsman (on page 19) tells us: “The “redundant” violence is considered to be a clear indication of the intention to commit torture”.

In the transport car

We read from our child's statement: “I was handcuffed and picked up while being called by my last name. In the car they beat me some more and when I tried to raise my head a bit they said “head down you faggot” because I was moaning and going “ahhh” from the pain, they said “what a cracked baby” and other similar “nice” things”. In the car they punched him in his broken ribs, they [the police] all swore at him and threatened to kill him.

Citizen's Advocate page 20: “The Court (ECtHR) has expressly recognised that the concept of torture includes cases such as “beating with rubber gloves, etc. binding the victim's wrists in such a way as to cause bodily injury...”

In the police station

The dominant image in the police station is the following: our exhausted, emaciated child in a chair, police officers holding his hands back, and a security guard sadistically punching him on his broken ribs, deliberately causing him more pain. He asks for water and they do not give him any. They refer him to a broken cooler... he tries to get to the cooler and struggles to get a few drops of water on his tongue to relieve himself. The policemen mocked and threatened him.

Order of the prosecutor of the Larissa Court of Appeal: "In the Security Department, he suffered new physical ill-treatment that caused him physical injuries and intense physical pain, which they sought to inflict from the outset and in addition to the injuries he had already suffered".

And the proof is his complaint, his testimony to those who found him thrown outside, to us, the parents, his injuries, the abrasions on his wrists, the hospital documents... As the Larissa prosecutor points out: "During the time of his hospitalisation on 16 June 2020, he denounced with his online post, with precision, everything he had suffered, narrating in a logical order and in detail each incident (indicating the time, place, place, manner and other circumstances of commission, perpetrators) that would not have been possible if he had not actually suffered them".

I also read on page 100 of the order: "He was subjected to a serious insult to his (human) dignity within the police station in Volos, in the form of severe degrading and humiliating behaviour by the complainants themselves, both because of the threats made to him: "It's time for you to die, you little shit, we're going to fuck you" or phrases such as ("why are you crying, only fags cry, are you a fag?" ... "how many ribs do you have? Seven? Nine? You won't miss them"), as well as their refusal to give him water, pointing to a water cooler that wasn't working properly (only a few drops of water came out), and finally the mockery because he couldn't manage to drink water from the cooler" ("they all had fun with me", according to his online post).

I read the relevant part of my child's complaint:

“When we arrived at the police station, the security guard who can be seen in the video opening the door of the police car with civilian number plates (his name is Pazaras, my note) took his turn and hit me while I was being held by the Crime Prevention and Suppression Squad officers. When I shouted that I wanted to go to hospital, I was told to stop lying and other things. When I asked for water, they wouldn't give it to me at first, and then they forced me to drink from a cooler where the water ran drop by drop from the bottom to the top. By this time I was crippled, on my back, unable to move my legs. And after they had all had their fun with me, they threw me in prison. Eventually they let me out after I heard them say that if they kept me they would have to take me to hospital, so they thought they should not be held responsible for this “bastard”. When I asked for the name of the plainclothes policeman who had beaten me so that I could file a complaint, they would not answer me and even mocked me, saying, “Who are you to know, the police?” And when I told them that I was going to file a complaint, I added, “Who is going to hurt you, the police?” And he laughed and put his hands up and said: “See, you're saying it yourself.” Of course, when I asked him what he would do if it was his child in my place, he replied that his child would not be “such a brat to go to the marches”.

Appeal Prosecutor Larisa, pages 99-100: “The defendants took the above actions with the purpose of punishing him, but the actions were not necessary for the performance of their duty and in no case can they be justified.

The officer on duty

According to what he wrote in the Incident Book on 14 June 2020, the officer on duty that night tried to cover up his fellow perpetrators, conceal the truth and deceive the judiciary so that the perpetrators could escape the punishment prescribed by law for their illegal acts. Page 107 Order of the Prosecutor of the Larissa Court of Appeal: The officer “although he knew that the latter had to be taken to hospital immediately, was indifferent”. He is therefore an accomplice.

Finally, while our child was in a state of shock from the beatings and torture he had suffered again in the police station, he was thrown out into the street. And the Ombudsman notes on page 2: “In the end, they decided to release him in order not to take him to hospital and thus not to link him to the injuries they had inflicted on him, despite the fact that the victim urgently requested medical assistance due to the pain he was in and his inability to breathe”.

They threw him out - from Vassilios' account in his complaint

“In the end, I was thrown out of the police station without being able to breathe well and certainly without being able to move well. I couldn't think of anything at that moment, I couldn't call anyone, I couldn't call the ambulance, nothing, I felt like I was half dead and I was just limping along trying to get somewhere, I didn't even know where, to get some water to drink, to do something to survive, that's how I felt at that moment. Luckily, some guys who were bringing food to the boy who had been detained from Saturday's events found me, picked me up and took me home... I contacted my family, we called the ambulance and we got to where we were”.

He also told us about it at home. A realistic description of a man, a young man, who was beaten and tortured by the police. He was thrown into the street. And he came out of the police station crippled. He could not walk away from the place. He describes the events exactly as they happened, and after a short time in hospital, the truth of his complaint was proven and what the eyewitnesses described was verified. This is the case of an abandoned victim, and while the Ombudsman, as we read above, directly notices and comments on it, the prosecutors overlook it. And in this way the insensitivity of the accused and their superiors is demonstrated.

And right there, opposite the police station, the witness Const. K. found him. She testifies that she found him at about 6 p.m., unable to walk because of the torture he had suffered in the police station. The accused are unrepentant. None of them testified that

they had discussed taking him to hospital... “Let's not have this bastard on us...”, as one of them said.



Yannīs and Vassilios Maggos (source: Yannīs Maggos archive)

No one above them was interested.... But this is what happens in the Ministry of Citizens' Protection; it happened in our case, as in many others. The cover-up by your department and the cover-up is complicity. There is a long history of incidents of police brutality, where police officers rape, shoot, kill, but enjoy impunity. Impunity leads to new crimes. And new crimes have been committed. Despite our wish that our child should be the last victim. A blatant case was that of young Nikos Sambanis, whose body was riddled with 38 bullets by the police and the irresponsible Theodorikakos (Minister at the Ministry of Citizens' Protection), who gave them nothing but medals... And unfortunately, crimes continue to be committed... and the Greek people pay for them... we pay them to kill our children.

Afterwards, no one had the courage to admit that they had made a mistake, that they had beaten him for no reason, that they had gone too far. Unlike our child who, when he was 18 years old and smashed the window of the Golden Dawn office, clearly admitted in court that he had done it and even explained why he had done it. And that cost him 7 months in prison. I wonder: 7 broken ribs, how much should that cost? I also ask myself: what is more sacred? The windows of the offices of a political party or the human body?

We are at home now

At home we saw a human being tangled up. He could not get up from the pain. He was crying. I was ashamed of the situation the police had put our child in. And our child understood and said to me: “Father, I want you to know that I did not shed a single tear at the police station so as not to give it to my fascist torturers”.

Vasilios’ thanks

On 19 June 2020, after being released from hospital, Vasilios writes in a public post:

“I must thank the whole world for not letting another incident of police brutality, arbitrariness and human rights violations remain in silence and darkness. I would also like to thank the medical staff, the vast majority of whom, firstly, tolerated me and, secondly, stood up to the state's brutality.

And now the hard part begins... 2-3 months of recovery and who knows how many years and if I will find my right...

But... Smile, man... What do they want from you?” [From the book of the same name by Chronis Misios].



Vasilios at the hospital (source: Yannis Maggos archive)

Consequences after discharge from the hospital

Our child was a wreck because of the behaviour of the police officers. He often told us that he felt humiliated and insulted by the torture he was subjected to. He took it to heart. Since then he has never recovered from the humiliation he suffered. His beating and torture in front of the courthouse, in the van and in the police station degraded him as a person, insulted his human dignity and made him feel humiliated and degraded, and this tormented him for the month that followed.

He was no longer himself. Until then he had been working, exercising, walking, having friends, social activities, taking part in social activities. All that was gone. His character and his psychology changed drastically. He became nervous and irritable. He lost sleep. He was easily irritated, restless, he had no peace of mind. He became a different person. He never recovered from the humiliation, the degradation of his personality and the violation of his human rights.

He went to the Volos Mental Health Centre and the report states: "He was admitted with acute pain and depressive episodes. Psychotherapeutic support is planned".

Galenteris: "A psychic link,, cannot be ruled out and is considered worthy of further investigation".

Matsa Aikaterini, a psychiatric specialist at the Therapeutic Community, concludes: "It is a tragedy to throw a man onto the street who is injured, in this case both physically and mentally. I understand that there is a direct and causal link between his physical and psychological torture and his death".

And then the questions begin to haunt us: Why was he beaten and tortured without having committed any crime? Why, when he was seriously injured through no fault of his own and needed immediate medical attention, was he taken to the police instead of being taken to hospital? Why was he then thrown out?

And we give ourselves only one answer: They punished him because he was a target. They punished him because he took part in the march the day before, because he was political, because he fought for a clean atmosphere in the city of Volos. What they did was cruel and inhuman. They are thugs. They are criminals.

If they had acted legally, our child would be alive today. And his death is due to their illegal actions. Our child was beaten and tortured for the sole purpose of punishment. The police and their superiors must realise at some point that it is hubris to usurp human bodies and treat them like punching bags. Human bodies are not punching bags or football balls, they are the bodies of our children, the children of the Greek people. They should realise that it is also an insult to despise human dignity and above all human life. Human life is a supreme, unique and irreplaceable good.

When our child was hospitalised as a result of the beating and torture he suffered at the hands of the police, he made a public complaint describing and denouncing what had happened. I would like to conclude by quoting the brave cry of my child, with which he ended his complaint. Our child Vassilios, who lived among us for only 26 years and 65 days... whose life ended on 13 July 2020, one month after he was murdered, after the murderous blows he received on 14 June 2020 in front of the Volos Courthouse:

"I know that the attack on me was deliberate. I know that they don't care about hitting in front of people and showing off their power. I know that the role of the police will not change, no matter what is revealed about them, because they are the mandated executioners of the state apparatus. But if they think they are scaring us, they are making a big mistake: they are not scaring us, they are enraging us. Our ideas, no matter how many of us they kill, will never die, they will always live in the minds of free people. We have been, we are and we will always be here, against all that suffocates us and prevents us from breathing, against injustice, for the freedom of us all, in every corner of the planet.

And may we never win... We will always fight!!!



And may we never win...

We will always fight

Vassilis Maggos present