

**29 APRIL 2005 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
INQUEST INTO DEATH OF ASYLUM SEEKER TO BEGIN**

Inquest Details

**HM Coroner: Roger Hatch, Assistant Deputy Coroner Central and South East Kent
The Ark, Noah's Ark Road, Dover,
Kent, CT17 0DD.**

Time: 10am Tuesday 3 May 2005

The inquest into the death of 40-year-old Elmas Ozmico will begin on Tuesday and will last between three and four weeks.

Elmas Ozmico arrived in the UK in the back of a lorry on 8 July 2003 from Turkey with her two children and nephew. She feared persecution. On arrival she claimed asylum and was detained by the port authorities before being moved to the Dover Detention Centre. Elmas and the family requested urgent medical attention as it was becoming apparent that she was quite unwell. Her initial requests appear to have been ignored.

Despite asking repeatedly for medical help, she saw no doctor and collapsed and only then was rushed to hospital where she died three days later of septicaemia.

The division of responsibility for the care of asylum seekers at Dover appears to be unclear and will be explored at the inquest. It will also look at the provision of basic medical care and attention to those who arrive in the country illegally or without identity documents.

The family hopes that the coroner will conduct a full, fearless and proper investigation into how Elmas Ozmico came by her death but are convinced that early medical intervention could have saved her life.

Note to editors:

INQUEST is the only non-governmental organisation in England and Wales that works directly with the families of those who die in custody. It provides an independent free legal and advice service to bereaved people on inquest procedures and their rights in the coroner's courts.

INQUEST has been working with the National Assembly Against Racism who raise awareness against all forms of racism in British society. NAAR, who referred Elmas Ozmico's case to INQUEST has been supporting Elmas' husband Haci Pekkelo since her tragic death.

Leading INQUEST lawyers group members Ian MacDonald QC, Sadat Sayeed and Shazia Khan will be representing the family.