

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release 28 May 2009

INQUEST TO OPEN INTO DEATH OF FAISAL AL-ANI FOLLOWING RESTRAINT IN THE CUSTODY OF ESSEX POLICE

10.00am Monday 1 June 2009

Sitting before HM Coroner for Southern and South East Essex, Dr Peter Dean
Southend Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend, SS2 6ER

The inquest into the death of 43 year old Faisal Al-Ani opens on 1 June 2009 and is expected to last for 15 days.

Mr Al-Ani, who had suffered from mental health problems, was seen behaving strangely in Southend town centre on 31 July 2005. Police were called and Mr Al-Ani was then subjected to a prolonged restraint. He was taken by police car to Southend Police Station and was restrained again during the journey. On arrival in the custody area it was noted that Mr Al-Ani was not breathing. An ambulance was called but attempts to resuscitate him failed. He was pronounced dead at Southend hospital later that night.

The family has waited nearly four years for the inquest and hopes it will examine, among other things:

- Why police officers forcibly restrained someone who appeared to be suffering from mental illness;
- whether the level of force used and the duration of the restraint were justified;
- whether the techniques deployed during the restraint were appropriate, used correctly and permitted within the policy and training issued to police officers;
- what happened during the short car journey to the police station and at what point Mr Al-Ani collapsed.

Faisal Al-Ani's family is represented by INQUEST Lawyers Group members barrister Stephen Simblet of Garden Court Chambers instructed by Carolynn Gallwey of Bhatt Murphy Solicitors.

Notes 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 and conducts policy work on the issues arising.

INQUEST is campaigning to ensure that the Coroners and Justice Bill 2009 results in fundamental reform of an inquest system currently hampered by delay, inconsistency of approach and lack of resources and unable to fulfil its vital function of preventing unnecessary deaths.

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The government must also make changes to ensure that bereaved families can participate effectively in inquest hearings by having equal access, alongside the police and Prison Service, to non means-tested public funding for their legal representation. [INQUEST's briefing on the Coroners & Justice Bill](#)

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