

Research Project

Swiss Network of International Studies (SNIS): Death in Custody: Towards an International Framework for Investigation and Prevention

Project funded by own resources

Project title Swiss Network of International Studies (SNIS): Death in Custody: Towards an International Framework for Investigation and Prevention

Principal Investigator(s) Elger, Bernice Simone ;

Organisation / Research unit

Ethik / Bio- und Medizinethik (Elger)

Project Website http://www.snis.ch/call-proposals-2008_249_elger

Project start 15.12.2008

Probable end 31.12.2018

Status Completed

The research project on death in custody is an interdisciplinary project involving different domains from legal medicine, international humanitarian law to human rights law. It is administered by the University Centre for Legal Medicine of Geneva, conducted by the Academy and developed in cooperation with the ICRC and The International Centre for Prisons Studies among others. The project is funded by the Swiss Network for International Studies-SNIS and is designed to produce a wide database on State's obligation to investigate death occurring while in State's custody in times of peace as well as during armed conflict.

Throughout the duration of the Research a comparative analysis of the existing national or international guidelines on investigating death in custody is carried out. This aims at drawing a comprehensive set of minimum standards on the terms under which an effective investigation shall be launched by the State and which shall be in line with international humanitarian law and human rights law tenets. In addition personal interviews are held with numerous experts (from the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, the ICRC, relevant NGOs, etc.) in order to compare existing strategies for investigation of deaths in custody and basic forensic techniques feasible in countries where local forensic specialists or infrastructure are not available.

After examining the international and regional legal documents stipulating State's obligation to investigate death in custody, the Academy will offer an online database mainly with regards to the jurisprudence of the leading human rights judicial bodies. Moreover, several legal contributions addressing different components and aspects of the obligation to investigate death in custody will be provided by the Research team and the supervising Professors and published online at the Academy's website and elsewhere by the end of the Research.

Among other steps taken to promote this Research, an international conference on the topic was held in Sweden in May 2010, co-organized by the Academy and other academic institutions and funded by the European Science Foundation. The Conference attracted legal scholars as well as practitioners from the legal medicine and international human rights fields to delve into issues related to the obligation to investigate death in custody.

The Research is carried out by Samar Khamis, Gloria Gaggioli and Patrick Mutzenberg under the supervision of Professors Bernice Elger and Paola Gaeta, Director of the LL.M. programme at the Academy.

Keywords Deaths in Custody, Ethics, Forensic Sciences, Human Rights, Human Rights Law, International Health, International Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law, Legal Medicine, Prisoners, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Financed by

Other funds

Add publication

Published results

1002505, Elger, B S, Prison medicine, public health policy and ethics: the Geneva experience, 1424-7860, Swiss Medical Weekly, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

Add documents

Specify cooperation partners

ID	Kreditinhaber	Kooperationspartner	Institution	Laufzeit - von	Laufzeit - bis
1017810	Elger, Bernice Simone	Stapleton, Adam	Center for International Human Rights at Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago	15.12.2008	31.12.2012
1017812	Elger, Bernice Simone	Coyle, Andrew	King's College, University of London	15.12.2008	31.12.2012
1017813	Elger, Bernice Simone	Tidball Binz, Morris	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	15.12.2012	31.12.2012
1017816	Elger, Bernice Simone	Gaeta, Paola	Law Faculty University of Geneva	15.12.2008	31.12.2011
1017817	Elger, Bernice Simone	Thali, Michael	Forensic Institute Universität Bern	15.12.2008	31.12.2011