



## **STATEMENT FROM THE UNITED FAMILIES & FRIENDS CAMPAIGN (UFFC) REGARDING THE PROCESSION ON SATURDAY 30TH OCTOBER 2010**

MEETING 12.00PM TRAFALGAR SQUARE FOR A MARCH TO DOWNING STREET

The United Families and Friends Campaign is a coalition of families and friends of those that have died in the custody of police and prison officers as well as those who are killed in secure psychiatric hospitals. It includes the families of Roger Sylvester, Leon Patterson, Rocky Bennett, Alton Manning, Christopher Alder, Brian Douglas, Joy Gardner, Aseta Simms, Ricky Bishop, Paul Jemmott, Harry Stanley, Glenn Howard, Mikey Powell, Jason Mcpherson and Sean Rigg to name but a few. Together we are building a network for collective action to end deaths in custody.

During the late nineties the families of the most controversial death in police custody victims came together to form UFFC. Since then we have campaigned for justice for our loved ones and our efforts have yielded some results. The police self-investigation of deaths in custody, previously overseen by the Police Complaints Authority, was replaced by the Independent Police Complaints Commission. The Attorney General was forced to undergo a review of the role of the Crown Prosecution Service. We continue to monitor these developments.

However, these reforms have not addressed the lack of justice in outstanding cases such as Joy Gardner, Brian Douglas & Shiji Lapite to name a few. These are human rights abuses and must be dealt with accordingly. Nothing can replace due process of law and with so much overwhelming evidence against police officers accused of murder the question remains why have they not been convicted? Our priorities were to continue to support cases such as Ricky Bishop, Roger Sylvester, Mikey Powell and Harry Stanley. In recent years other high profile cases such as those of Ian Tomlinson, Jean Charles De Menezes and Sean Rigg show how the IPCC and the CPS have continued to fail us. The deaths have not stopped and nor shall we. Our Annual Remembrance Procession will take place on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

Samantha and Marcia, sisters of Sean Rigg said: "On the 21st August 2008, our brother died suddenly after being restrained by 4 Brixton police officers, then it took the IPCC over 7 months just to interview the officers involved in the death of a fit and physically healthy man. Two years on and we are being told it will take another 2 long years before his death will be properly scrutinised in a coroner's court in the form of an inquest! We

are joining this UFFC march because want this government to know that our family will not stop fighting until we uncover the real truth of how our brother came to his death and just who is responsible!"

Stephanie Lightfoot-Bennet whose brother Leon Patterson died in Stockport police station in 1992 said: " I have been coming to this march for the past 12 years. I am fighting to get a public inquiry into how my twin brother died. I have got too many questions and not enough answers. My family have a right to know"

Susan Alexander mother of Azelle Rodney who was shot dead by police in April 2005 said: "I have been supporting the UFFC ever since I heard about it in 2005. It is crucial that people support this rally and show a united front because anyone at any time can loose a loved one, but they DO NOT ever imagine that it would be at the hands of the state. Affected families and friends gather believing that they will achieve Justice, public support and strength to fight on in their fight for Justice. It is important that the public know what really happens in these cases."

Sieta Lambrias sister of Mikey Powell who died in police custody in Birmingham in September 2003 said: "The struggle for justice for my brother, and all the others that have died at the hands of the state, goes on. We ask people to come and support us. We cannot keep silent and condone these killings"

Patricia Coker the mother of Paul Coker who died in Plumstead police station in August 2005 said: "We have zero tolerance of murder, manslaughter cruelty and negligence being carried out by the British police and condoned by Parliament. It is our intention to speak for our loved ones who have died in custody"

Janet Alder whose brother Christopher died in the custody of Hull police officers in April 1998 said: "I am currently taking out a Race Discrimination case against the CPS, with concerns about how they conducted the prosecution and ignored all my concerns about the evidence relating to the prosecution against the 5 officers responsible for Christopher Alders unlawful killing! I urge all of you to support us in our unrelenting struggle for justice and truth"

Brenda Weinberg, sister of Brian Douglas who died in police custody in Clapham London in May 1995 said: "It is not in the public interest for the victims of deaths in custody to be denied justice"

UFFC is supported INQUEST, Migrant Media, Newham Monitoring Project, Pan African Society Community Forum, and United Campaign Against Police Violence.

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Notes to editors:

### **What we believe**

- That failure of State officials to ensure the basic right to life is made worse by the failure of the State to prosecute those responsible for custody deaths.
- That the failure to prosecute those responsible for deaths in custody sends the message that the State can act with impunity.

### **What We Demand**

- Deaths in police custody must be investigated by a body that is genuinely independent of the police.
- Prison deaths must be subject to a system of properly funded investigation that is completely independent of the Prison Service.
- Officers involved in custody deaths be suspended until investigations are completed.
- Prosecutions should automatically follow 'unlawful killing' verdicts at inquests.
- Police forces are made accountable to the communities that they serve.
- Legal Aid and full disclosure of information be made to the relatives of the victims.
- Officers responsible for deaths should face criminal charges, even if retired.