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By Hand and By Post

The Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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FOR PUBLICATION

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Dear Prime Minister

Deaths in State Custody

We write further to previous correspondence. As you are aware the United Family and Friends Campaign (UFFC) is a coalition of family campaigns who have lost loved ones as a result of violence or neglect by state officials charged within their care. These include the police, prison and immigration officers/officials and NHS staff. UFFC continues to gain interest and support from various members of the community.

Today marks UFFC's 15th peaceful annual remembrance procession and we will march to Downing Street from Trafalgar Square. For the record, this is the 15th annual letter to the head of government from the UFFC since its inception in the late 90's when it was formed to demand justice for those who have died in state custody in suspicious and controversial circumstances. On no occasion has the government engaged in a process of meaningful dialogue following the delivery of the letters.

After arduous campaigning by a number of families and high profile cases, a number of reviews were commissioned over the past year - (notwithstanding similar past campaigns, reviews, reports and recommendations) - for example, amongst other findings, the findings and recommendations of the Home Affairs Select Committee's (HASC) Report into the work of the IPCC, the findings and

recommendations in the Review of Mental Health and Policing by Lord Victor Adebowale, Dr. Silvia Cassale's Review and recommendations of the original investigation by the IPCC into the death of Sean Rigg and the IPCC's investigations into deaths in custody as a whole, and the IPCC's recent progress report into it's own Review in investigating deaths in custody, the final report expected in December of this year - bare many of the core issues of concern by the families.

The unlawful killing verdicts into the unlawful deaths of Jimmy Mubenga and Azelle Rodney earlier this year has yet again shown compelling evidence of wrong-doing, deceit and corruption by state officials (as in previous cases) where repetitive fundamental errors, racism and a lack of duty of care at an unacceptable standard has yet again been exposed.

A number of documentaries and radio chat shows have also highlighted disturbing growing public concern in mental health and policing.

High profile Inquests continue to give rise to disturbing accounts given by state officials, which are implausible and/or improbable. Imminent Inquests will no doubt hear further implausible accounts.

However, the deaths still continue with no accountability and the result is that deaths in custody are at an all time high. Countless years of unnecessary lengthy investigations continue to stifle justice to the families. The Hillsborough disgrace echoes year after year, case after case. Injustices as in the cases of Joy Gardner, Christopher Alder, Brian Douglas and Mikey Powell, to name but a few, are inhumane. Yet the British government refuses and/or is unwilling to give justice where it is blatantly due.

The intrusion and surveillance of families who have lost their loved ones in state custody is nothing more than further insult and a breach of their privacy.

The "plebgate" 'supervised' investigation by the IPCC and Questions by the HASC showed an MP and the Met. Police at loggerheads over whether the word 'pleb' was said outside your place of residence. Evidence of deceit and cover-up by the officer(s) as to whether the word 'pleb' was used bares no comparison to the deceit and cover-up of a 'death in custody'. That investigation appears to have been fast-tracked (maybe because the complaint was made by an MP and not by an ordinary member of the public.). As is usually the case, the officers were found to have no case to answer by the Met. Police. In evidence recently given to the HASC by Deborah Glass of the IPCC, she felt that the officers should have been disciplined for gross misconduct since the evidence pointed to that conclusion. What was the point of the IPCC's supervision?

In the public's interest, we believe it is essential that the police (the least reformed of all public services) be scrutinised and urgently reformed, and that state officials are subject to the same judicial system as any ordinary member of the public.

Please see our statements and demands below.

Yours faithfully

UFFC

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 failure to prosecute those responsible for deaths in custody sends the message that the State can act with impunity.

What we demand

1. Fundamental reform of the IPCC to ensure open robust transparent and thorough effective investigations into police deaths in custody by a 'truly' independent body from the very outset of the death.
2. Officers and officials directly involved in custody deaths be suspended until investigations are completed.
3. Immediate interviewing of officers and all officials concerned with the death.
4. Officers and officials should never be allowed to 'collude' over their evidence and statements of fact.
5. Full disclosure of information to the families.

6. Prosecutions should automatically follow 'unlawful killing' verdicts at Inquests and officers responsible for those deaths should face criminal charges, even if retired.
7. Nationwide implementation of police body cameras and cameras in all police vehicles in the interests of both the officers and the public.
8. The end of means testing of families for legal aid. There is a lack of funds for family legal representation at Inquests whilst officers and NHS staff get full legal representation from the public purse – this is unbalanced.

UFFC specific demands regarding the operation of the IPCC:

1. Removal and/or drastic reduction of ex-police officers within the IPCC in order to regain public confidence.
2. IPCC to continue to use the power to compel officers involved in custody death cases to be interviewed.
3. Individual statements should immediately be taken from all police officers to avoid any collusion.
4. Full disclosure of evidence to families and better communications with them.
5. Lay persons to be urgently trained as investigators to work within the IPCC as commissioners.