

The People's Tribunal

On Police Killings



Tribunal Document

5-6 April 2025 London

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1. Welcome Address

After decades of campaigning for justice and the continual denial of police killings by the British state, the families of those killed by the police proclaim the People's Tribunal on Police Killings (PTPK) in session.

The PTPK calls on the ultimate reservoir of power—people worldwide—to hold the British state accountable and demand justice for families. The People's Tribunal will create new realities for the future, reach out across the globe, and kindle hope. In the face of state denial, it is an act of resistance, a refusal to be silenced, a celebration of humanity, and an act of revolutionary love.

2. Our Call

We call on all people to:

- Reject the inquest system. The inquest system has failed to provide an opportunity to successfully prosecute a single police officer for the killings. Even when an inquest jury finds evidence of police criminality, the Crown Prosecution Service protects the police. It is a legal framework of containment. It is an archaic distraction from the mechanisms of real justice.
- Reject any more governmental inquiries. In every single governmental inquiry the government has failed to make the substantive changes needed for justice, as well as for prevention. These inquiries have not benefited the families, despite millions of pounds being paid to judges, lawyers, and organisations colluding in these cover ups.
- Reject the language of liberalism that is used and ordained by the government. These are not 'deaths in police custody'. When the sustained

and systematic nature of these cases and the political protection of the police is properly examined, these cases can only be referred to as police killings.

- Accept that the amount of evidence against the police—including video and eyewitness accounts—is undeniable. We will not allow the state to suppress this widespread evidence from the public any longer.
- Accept the fact that we need no more legislation, no more excuses, no more police training. The criminal law needs to be applied to police officers. What has been missing is the political will by successive governments to implement justice. That is what must be created through the will of the people.

3. Why a Tribunal?

The People's Tribunal on Police Killings has emerged as a radical grassroots initiative led by the families of those killed by the police in the UK. Following more than 3000 deaths at the hands of the police over the past 50 years there have only been 4 successful prosecutions leading to police officers being convicted and imprisoned. This figure is one of the lowest in the world. The disproportionate number of Black people killed represents the depth of racism that is ingrained in the police forces of the UK. Policing structures are corrupt and must be abolished. The rate of police killings has been steadily increasing since the 1970s. While police violence increases the prospect of justice rapidly diminishes. We wholly reject all claims that this situation is improving, or that amendments or tweaks to the existing system will prevent further deaths.

The failure to prosecute successfully has led to the formation of the PTPK, supported by the United Families & Friends Campaign, Migrant Media, Black Lives Matter, and 4WardEver. Its aim is to radically challenge the existing structures and ongoing collusion that had led to this failure of justice. The PTPK is led by the families and friends of those killed by the police and voluntary investigators—none of whom have faith that the system will ever deliver justice. We are instigating the reopening of all of these several thousand deaths and initiating their reinvestigations. These

investigations will be led by activists, supported by an international team of lawyers and academics. This is only the first step in further action to come.

The People's Tribunal on Police Killings will expose the extent of this injustice and implement a series of actions to make the real revolutionary change that is needed. The PTPK adopts the position that an injury to one is an injury to all. We will no longer tolerate the media strategy of highlighting individual cases and narrativising these as exceptional. Justice for one is not justice for all. The blood of the victims of police violence has run dry but the tears have not stopped, and nor has the demand for justice. A generation of families have gone to their graves with the painful knowledge that the state has evaded any consequences of the killings of their loved ones. You cannot rest, or grieve, when the unresolved killing of your loved one is a shadow that follows you. A new generation is emerging—the children and grandchildren of those killed by the police continue to call for justice but the appeal is no longer to the British state. It is international.

4. What are Police Killings?

We reject the established terminology of 'deaths in custody'—an inaccurately narrow and misleading state definition that does not, for instance, cover the killings of those who have not technically been arrested or sectioned. Crucially, the widespread use of the term 'deaths in custody' by the establishment and mainstream media serves to hide the violent, racist, and negligent acts that are the real context for these deaths. The term 'in custody' conjures images of confined spaces and thereby acts to separate these deaths from the broader systematisation of state violence enacted through the police, prison, and mental health systems. The legal terminologies of 'murder' and 'manslaughter' are part of a system that demonstrably sanctions police violence. And they imply a hierarchy of pain and death. We therefore use the term 'police killing'.

Police killings include directly caused deaths, such as shootings, beatings, or forced restraint, among other harms. Killings also occur due to police negligence, neglect, and the failure to hold accountable other police officers causing harm. Police killings

involve other agencies, such as medical staff acting in concert with the police and are part of maintaining the system of violent and deadly incarceration. We also recognise that the stress and trauma of violent detention causes death even after release, perhaps years later, though these cases are erased from the records. By using the term police killings, we see the myriad ways that life is denied. And we are covering this legacy in the Tribunal.

5. Failures

‘An Inquest is an investigation into a death which appears to be due to unknown, violent or unnatural causes, designed to find out who the deceased was, and where, when and how (meaning by what means). In some inquests, for example where the person has died whilst in custody or state detention, the scope of the inquest can be widened to include the broader circumstances leading to the death – but the Coroner decides on the scope of the inquest.’
“Inquests - A Factsheet for Families”, from the Coroners’ Court Support Service

The above description outlines the functioning of the state apparatus following a police killing. Power is in the hands of the coroner—a state official who answers to the Home Office. An inquest is opened following a death, but is then closed pending any police investigation—an investigation that in many circumstances is overseen by a police accountability body. Police accountability over the past decades has been the responsibility of the Police Complaints Authority (1985-2003), the Independent Police Complaints Commission (2004-2017), and the Independent Office of Police Conduct (2018-current). These organisations are run by state officials, and often employ ex-police officers to undertake their purportedly independent investigations. All these organisations are funded by the state, and answer to the Home Secretary. The historic corruption and failure in these organisations’ investigations is therefore not a surprise. They act as a buffer between the victims’ families and justice.

Once the investigation is complete official recommendations on which legal actions are to be taken are sent to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the body that

prosecutes criminals accused of crime on behalf of the state. The CPS relies on the police for evidence. As is often the case the CPS decision is not to prosecute police 'in the public interest'. The decision is based on the political needs of the state to maintain public trust in the police to sustain control and order. It is not concerned with delivering justice for the victims of police violence.

On some occasions, when the public media profile of a police killing reaches high-profile national concern—such as in the cases of the deaths of Joy Gardner, Dalian Atkinson, or Sarah Everard—the CPS are forced to take the case to criminal trial before an inquest. There have only been 4 successful convictions of police officers for a killing, despite the several thousand deaths recorded, and none of those convictions were the result of an inquest. It is a scandal that for the majority of families the inquest itself becomes the forum where the state, which includes NGOs, corral the families in what is a failed attempt to use a blunt tool to pierce a corrupt body. For over 40 years families, campaigners, and lawyers have engaged in momentous battles with the state in a bid to improve the inquest system. To what end? At times the inquest verdict, which has no criminal sanctions, requires the CPS to reconsider its original refusal to prosecute. In a few cases, such as in the cases of Harry Stanley or Christopher Alder, it can lead to a trial—but these are typically unsuccessful due to the CPS mishandling. For the vast majority of families the result is 'no prosecution'.

The inquest system has complicated, impeded, and distracted the struggle of the families, and that is clearly what it is designed to do. Over the past 40 years of the families' engagement with the inquest system, which includes state-lead attempts to improve it, not a single police officer has been successfully prosecuted and convicted of a killing. To continue to ask for reforms of the inquest system is now therefore untenable. To continue to ask the oppressor for justice is untenable. There have been several public inquiries into the failing of the system, and they have achieved nothing—each inquiry has done nothing more than further distress families and distract them from both organising and grieving. The inquest system is a form of whitewashing which gives an appearance of justice, but is set up to protect the police

and state. It divides and rules families so that in the end nobody gets justice. The inquest system, and attempts to reform it, are a containment of the struggle—which is why we reject it.

6. Objectives of the Tribunal

The People's Tribunal on Police Killings is formed in response to the ongoing and persistent violence of the UK state domestically whilst recognising its origins in colonial methods of control.

We urgently need to dispel the hegemonic liberal worldview which legitimises police violence as a normal function and necessary byproduct of maintaining state control. This worldview—endemic to both state legislative frameworks and to all those seeking only to reform them—is one which silences dissenting voices in order to maintain an ideology of repression. This silence can be shattered by the voices of the people whose loved ones have been killed by the police. Our objective is that the world hears about, and acts on, the crimes of the UK state.

One means of dislodging the mainstream narrative perpetuated about police killings is to change how police killings are perceived and interpreted by the public. We will expose and counteract the liberal language of the state, and to clarify that police violence should frequently be understood as a form of torture. Defining these killings and police violence as torture is already widespread in other countries and in states, such as in Chicago, and was articulated by Nils Melzer (UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment) almost ten years ago in 2017. The public needs to understand this definition is not interpretive, but factually correct. In defining these killings and violence as torture we begin to change the way in which police killings are perceived, then the process of imagining alternative realities can begin.

We also aim to clearly expose how the state covers up their crimes. Revealing the corruption of the state is a key means through which people can unlearn what is often understood at first to be evident: that the state is there to protect them.

We insist that the voices of those affected, the families, are heard clearly. Their suffering at the hands of the state is acute. Hearing their stories is hearing what is true.

Racism is one of the means through which power is articulated. Racism is the founding concept from which notions of Britain, and Britishness, have been derived and developed. Police killings disproportionately impact black people through explicitly racist actions which have a long history in racist, colonialist conquest.

We believe that the press, politicians, inquest system, charity sector, and wider legal system are all arms of the state which should be dismantled. We are abolitionist in our approach with abolition as an ongoing process. We recognise that a system that produces injustice cannot be reformed to deliver justice, but that does not preclude confronting the legal system in order to raise public consciousness of the extreme violence perpetrated and preserved by the state. At this moment in history we are seeking for all cases to be reopened, and for those guilty to be prosecuted. The nature of and method of the prosecutions will be determined by the families.

The evidence is presented to the Tribunal using five different but interlinked perspectives which dismantle long-established narratives to articulate the truth:

1. **Torture:** A killing is never a discrete act in a given moment. Rather, death is preceded by acts of violence perpetrated by the police right up until the act or acts which result in the death—the act of killing. These are the restraints, the beatings, the suffocations, the assaults, and the continuous infliction of pain and suffering on those unable to resist. Police violence and police killings are acts of torture.

2. **Language of Collusion:** Racist and derogatory language is used by the perpetrators of violence against individuals and communities. Language is also used by the state, the media, and liberal institutions to construct narratives and assert social control. It is these narratives that enable, justify and normalise police killings.
3. **Terror:** The violence of a police killing is a terror experienced at the moment of death; terror is also continually experienced by the families and communities due to the extensive and ongoing police harassment, surveillance, public shaming, and intimidation. Autopsies mutilate bodies, body parts are retained, requests for information are rebuffed, and legal funding is made inaccessible. The trauma experienced as a result of this terror, of these acts of inhumanity, endures through future generations. Combatants returning from war are regularly treated for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and families of those killed by the police suffer the same symptoms. However, we must go one step further. There is no 'post' to this trauma—we recognise this by rejecting the term PTSD (which is ironically often used as a diagnostic for police officers who have killed), and instead using the term Continuing Traumatic Stress Disorder (CTSD), which has emerged from the crucial and growing movement of anticolonial psychiatric work and activism. CTSD undermines the mental and physical health of family members, to the extent that some resort to taking their own life—another unattributed police killing. CTSD is a direct result of the widespread state of infrastructural terror.
4. **State cover-ups:** the inquest system acts as a form of legal containment; its effect is to protect the government and legal institutions. Despite decades of attempts to engage with this system in a process of reform, inquests and public inquiries have failed to prevent subsequent killings. It is a broken, unreformable system, controlled by the government.

5. **Black resistance:** is at the forefront of the movement because racism is at the core of cases; police killings are disproportionately of people of colour. Black resistance in the UK has manifested itself in many ways for decades. There have been victories as well as defeats, but the ability of people to fight for justice is undiminished. Today the issue of class needs to be centred in the approach to resistance, and the expansion of the struggle to include white working-class families whose loved ones have been killed is essential to building the movement and creating a critical mass.

Establishing this Tribunal is the latest act for all who refuse to be silenced, who celebrate humanity, and who kindle flames of hope from despair. The People's Tribunal is an ongoing series of actions which will use the tribunal event as a means to build momentum for an ongoing movement. It is about bringing people who are impacted by, and want to resist, state violence together.

We aim to build connections and solidarities with other movements. Police killings do not stand in isolation and are connected to many other state-building projects precipitated by neoliberalism. These projects include maintaining violent borders, detention across various settings, the ongoing mass-imprisonment of racialised and working-class people, surveillance and environmental degradation in the name of Capital.

Following The People's Tribunal on Police Killings there will be three further tribunals over a 10 year period; on deaths in the context of immigration, in prisons, and in the context of secure medical units. The People's Tribunal is part of an international movement for radical change.

7. Who are we?

The People's Tribunal on Police Killings is a continually expanding collective comprised of:

The families, friends and loved ones of those killed by the police

- o These families and friends have been fighting, organising and campaigning for justice for over forty years. Some had originally gathered together through the United Family and Friends Campaign (UFFC) but this has now continued to expand in a radical direction to form the Tribunal. The families, supported by long term organisers, led the formation of the tribunal and have full oversight and involvement to ensure it is their voice which is heard by the Tribunal.

A team of voluntary supporting Investigators/Organisers

- The existing team was formed in 2022/23 from a public call-out by activists and families, who were looking to bring together the next generation of activists to carry on the work of supporting the families, as well as undertaking case research and organising the Tribunal.

Use of force expert

- The PTPK has used its own use of force expert to forensically examine the evidence of each case from a range of sources but primarily from the statements of every police officer who had first and direct contact with the victim. These statements were supplemented by available CCTV evidence in some cases.

Our expert was able to scrutinise these cases - which were deemed by the state not to be worthy of prosecution, to not be in the public interests to prosecute or to not reach the required level of proof for a conviction - and make an assessment on whether the use of force was applied to legal standards. The analysis delivered was used to assess whether there was enough evidence of the crimes of murder or manslaughter committed by police officers in these cases.

Use of force expert: **Rod Charles**

Our Tribunal Panel

- Our international expert of activists has deep experience of allied liberation struggles and movements against state violence. Their role is to listen to the evidence presented and form a judgement on the actions to be taken for justice. They are:
- **Mireille Fanon Mendès-France** (Frantz Fanon Foundation, Martinique/France)
- **Dr Mona El-Farra** (Human rights and healthcare advocate, Palestine)
- **Dr Joy James** (Ebenezer Fitch Professor of Humanities at Williams College, USA)
- **Emerson Caetano** (Senior Fellow UN International Decade for People of African Descent, Brazil)
- **Tony Doherty** (Bloody Sunday Trust, Ireland)
- **Esther Mamadou-Blanco** (International Coalition for People of African Descent, Spain)

Our Expert Witnesses

- Our Expert Witnesses (EW) were researched and invited by the Investigators/Organisers team, and decided upon in dialogue with the families. Our EWs were selected and approached according to the five areas identified as central to the struggle. Each EW represents and contributes their specific expertise in one of these respective areas.
- Torture: **Dr Asim Qureshi (Research Director, CAGE UK)**
- Language: **Professor Gargi Bhattacharyya**
- State cover-ups: **Paul O'Connor (The Pat Finucane Centre)**
- Terror: **Luke Daniels**
- Black Resistance: **Professor Gus John**

8. Evidence-Gathering Process

The first PTPK meetings to involve and brief newly appointed investigators began in January 2023. Assembled in response to open calls issued online and through existing networks of organising, a team of fifteen investigators/researchers were assigned 20 dedicated cases of individuals killed by the police since 1990. Over

2000 people had been killed by the police within this period of time—the 20 cases assigned to investigators/researchers comprised roughly 1% of this total. This sample points to systemic legalised murder.

The earliest stage of research was to amass all available materials related to allocated cases, across the following areas:

1. Investigations: via Police Complaints Authority, Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)
2. Legal: inquests & trials via Coroners Service and Crown Prosecution Service
3. Police: disciplinary and any public statements via relevant police force
4. Media: all stories not covered by above including all media coverage of the case
5. Family campaigns: events & public statements made by family and friends
6. Material not listed above but deemed relevant by the investigator

The PTPK team—composed of the family and friends of those killed and the supporting investigators—began to meet regularly as a group to share and discuss their findings, and to discuss both the potential implications of the longer-term movement and to plan tribunal events. During this period our expert on police ‘Use of Force’, a former police officer, was simultaneously assessing each investigation based on policy of force and its fatal application.

Throughout this period, as case reports were revised, refined and edited to follow a consistent single format they were shared with the families of those killed, who read and approved the material, as well as providing their own narrative and further details that would otherwise not be accessible to investigators. The importance of this was to ask the questions that had not been asked, for the families to raise issues that had been ignored, suppressed or marginalised.

Case reports were finalised through discussion and close consultation with families and all resulting finalised reports were produced following families' sign-off and approval of all included content.

9. Evidence

The evidence is presented using five different but interlinked perspectives to dismantle long-established narratives and articulate the truth.

The Tribunal is organised into five sessions:

- Session 1—**Torture**
- Session 2—**Language of Collusion**
- Session 3—**Terror**
- Session 4—**State Cover-up**
- Session 5—**Black Resistance**

Each session begins with the PTPK position statement, and is then followed by three areas of supporting evidence:

(1) Case evidence from selected families - *a short summary of the cases is included in this document and oral evidence will be presented by families during the tribunal.*

(2) The Use of Force analysis

and is finally underpinned by

(3) the relevant Expert Witness's statement

Session 1: Torture

PTPK Position Statement on Torture

We recognise the importance of contradicting the terminology 'use of force', whether used within state legislation or policy, or liberal rhetoric of reform. 'Force' here is understood to be deployed in 'disproportionate', 'unnecessary' or 'unreasonable'

ways. This language works to undermine the grave severity, often fatal, of the violence perpetrated by the state. It works to maintain the project of impunity which is afforded to the police.

If the limits of our language are the limits of our world, we believe it is vital that we use accurate language to describe the full horror of police violence if it is to be properly and adequately addressed.

Using the language of 'torture' and 'inhumane and degrading treatment' is about enacting a shift in perceptions of police violence. We need to start to understand the police as perpetrators of extreme and purposeful violence against the people over whom they exert power.

We also acknowledge that calling police killings 'torture' is not going to solve the problem of state violence. Whilst acknowledging that changing our language is not the only solution, we recognise that it is part of the project of changing how these sustained levels of violence are interpreted and viewed. It is part of the project of dismantling the current framework.

We want to utilise a wide definition of torture without diluting it as a concept.

Current Definitions of Torture

Article 3

Article 3 of The Human Rights Act lays out the current framework for protecting people from torture: prohibition of torture: "no one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

- "Torture is deliberate inhuman treatment causing very serious and cruel suffering.
- Inhuman treatment or punishment causes intense physical and mental suffering.

- Degrading treatment/punishment, arouses in the victim a feeling of fear, anguish and inferiority capable of humiliating and debasing the victim and possibly breaking his or her physical or moral resistance.
- Threats which are ‘sufficiently real and immediate’ to cause mental anguish can come within the definitions even in the absence of physical harm
- Torture requires deliberation but inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment does not: the state’s deprivation of any lawful source of sustenance can amount to inhuman or degrading treatment.”

The degree of suffering is the main difference between torture and inhuman treatment, but it also has to be deliberate—for example to extract information, or to intimidate. Examples of acts found by the Court to amount to torture include rape, threats of harm to family, being kept blindfolded, and mock executions. The suffering can be mental as well as physical.

We believe that the events around police killings fulfil the above definitions of torture and inhumane and degrading treatment.

The Istanbul Protocol: Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment/Punishment

“This manual was developed to enable States to address one of the most fundamental concerns in protecting individuals from torture—effective documentation. Such documentation brings evidence of torture and ill-treatment to light so that perpetrators may be held accountable for their actions and the interests of justice may be served.”

The Istanbul Protocol contains sections on international anti-torture standards, relevant ethical codes (including ethics of lawyers and health professionals), the legal investigation of torture, general considerations for interviews, physical evidence of torture, and psychological evidence of torture.

We believe that the Istanbul Protocol could be applied in the context of police killings in order to determine whether the police violence constitutes torture.

Contextualising Police Killings as Torture

In the context of police killings we understand that torture is constituted by the acts of violence perpetrated by the police, right until the moment of the act or acts of killing which results in the death. These preceding acts of violence include the restraints, the beatings, the suffocations, the assaults, and the continuous infliction of pain and suffering on those unable to resist.

We also acknowledge that there are many, many more instances of torture which do not result in a killing. These are often termed as 'near misses' by liberal campaigners. These are acts of violence which are perpetrated by the police in their 'line of service'. These are the illegal strip searches, stop and searches, restraints, kettling, arbitrary detention, and any other instances of cruel and inhumane treatment which proliferate the daily practices of UK policing. We understand that violence, and the monopoly on violence, is often understood as how a state legitimises itself. It is this fact which results in the state perpetrating acts of violence with impunity. It is in this context that we acknowledge the increasing militarisation of law enforcement officials and their equipment, training, and self-declared rules of engagement. We highlight that these forms of torture are rooted in long-standing, deeply entrenched racism and other forms of discrimination within law enforcement.

We also understand that torture could be understood as constituted by other acts of policing which are not necessarily instances of physical violence. We need to consider and make known to the public the ways in which undercover policing, harassment, surveillance, interrogation, racism, misogyny, and intimidation are pervasive in policing. Each of these could be evaluated as forms of psychological abuse which constitute torture. These forms of abuse work to induce and perpetuate fear and paranoia in racialised communities who experience lifelong over-policing.

As well as every day policing practices, this category of psychological torture includes other aspects and experiences which are inflicted on people when the police kill someone. It is our position that the act of torture is not only inflicted on the victim, but also recognising other victims to the torture, including:

- The torture experienced by families and friends of the victim, including in relation to the trauma of engaging in lengthy, and untrustworthy legal processes e.g. inquests, criminal trials, civil litigation.
- The torture of eye-witnesses to the killings for which there is no redress.

All of the above forms of torture should be understood as a means of generating and maintaining fear in certain communities. All of the above forms of torture are linked together and reliant on each other.

History of using the language of torture in this context

This is not the first time that police killings has been recognised as an act of torture. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture visited Britain in September 1997. This was prompted by three cases, in which inquest juries had returned verdicts of unlawful killing but the Crown Prosecution Service had decided not to prosecute. These cases were the cases of Shiji Lapite, Richard O'Brien and Derek Treadaway. The committee is the European watchdog on torture and degrading treatment. The report they completed after their visit highlights failures in prosecuting and disciplining police officers and others for death or mistreatment of persons across the UK whose liberty is restrained. The committee condemned the system by which police officers are held to account in the UK and the legal remedies for police misconduct which are available. They set out recommendations about restraint techniques, prison overcrowding, increased watchdogs for officers and conditions of detention. The response of the UK Government was laclustre and the language of 'torture' and the impact that the Committee for the Prevention of Torture was limited.

The UK Government distanced itself from the findings of the report and dismissed many of the recommendations. It is an imperative that we re-vitalise any effort to bring the language of torture into this context.

Despite the many, many instances of torture perpetrated by the UK state throughout its colonial history and ongoing imperialist wars, the UK state distances itself from being included in the discussion on torture. The UK is quick to condemn other states and militant groups which perpetrate torture. In the UK, torture is widely understood as something that happens in other countries and foreign to the UK context. In doing this, the UK attempts to maintain the false divide between the civilised Global North and the rest of the world. We need to interrogate the racialised way in which the notion of torture is deployed in international politics. The word torture should not just be reserved for condemning the actions racialised of people. This is a key trope of liberalism and one that erases the long history of UK complicity in acts of torture which continue to this day.

Successes of Chicago

In 2015, Chicago City Council recognised the history of police torture by passing legislations that provides reparations on the grounds of police torture. Work by activists was done to uncover and publicize a police torture ring led by former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge in the 1980s. Victims obtained exonerations, release from prison and money damages for torture survivors in civil rights lawsuits. A [sweeping ordinance](#) was enacted that gave Chicago the distinction of being the first municipality in the nation to provide reparations for racially motivated police violence. The ordinance won some financial compensation for victims of historic police torture, as well as free tuition for survivors and their families at Chicago's city colleges. The ordinance also called for the creation of a memorial honoring victims of police torture, the addition of cases to the Chicago Public Schools history curriculum, and the creation of Chicago Torture Justice Center, where victims of police torture can get access to care and support.

Torture Supporting Evidence (1)—Selected Family Cases

Ibrahima Sey

Ibrahima was a Black man, and father of two, who was killed by Essex police following an arrest at his home in March 1996. Ibrahima had a history of poor mental health and police attended his home after a disturbance was reported. He was transported to Ilford police station and in the rear yard of the police station, at least twelve officers surrounded him. Ibrahima was on his knees when CS spray was sprayed in his mouth, eyes and nose. He was then moved into the police station where he was restrained face down on the floor for over 15 minutes, until he died. Ibrahima's family have been fighting for justice since 1996.

Michael Lloyd Powell

Mikey was a 38 year old Black British man, and father, who was killed by West Midlands police in September 2003. Mikey was hit with a patrol car before being struck with a baton and restrained. Mikey's family have been fighting for justice since 2003.

Roger Sylvester

Roger was a 30 year old Black man who was restrained outside his home in Tottenham in January 1999. 8 officers brought him to the ground, handcuffing and stripping him before transporting him to hospital where police continued to restrain. Roger's family have been fighting for justice since 1999.

Torture Supporting Evidence (2)—Use of Force Analysis

- Oral evidence

Torture Supporting Evidence (3)—Expert Witness Statement

- Oral evidence

Session 2: Language of Collusion

PTPK Position Statement on Language of Collusion

The PTPK asserts that there exists collusion between the state, the media, and liberal institutions of reform which manifests in how their shared language functions to construct narratives and assert social control. They operate in a way that reproduces the harm of colonial structures and obstructs any pathway to justice for families and communities affected by police killings. Power is neither an agency or a structure, but a dispersed and pervasive ‘regime of truth.’ Attention to language, discourse, and narratives of violence should never come at the cost of attention to material facts and conditions—but the linguistic strategies which constitute and reproduce a certain version of the ‘truth’ are the sites of power in the state that must be brought to light in tandem with factual analysis.

The Tribunal will provide space for families to challenge the language of the state, and the forms of containment they endure as a result of how the press and media organisations operate.

We aim to illuminate how the police deploy language in the context of investigations into killings, how the media create and sustain particular narratives, and the mechanisms of the language of the state as it deploys liberal language (under both Labour and Conservative rule)—particularly as this pertains to the inquest process.

Police Language

Police tell stories not only to make sense of their experiences’, writer Carson Cole Arthur argues, but ‘they tell stories to establish legal doctrines and support justifications for their decisions.’¹ In the context of police killings, language is deployed by the offending officers in order to exonerate themselves. We see a rewriting of history in their statements and during investigations. This is exemplified

¹Carson Cole Arthur, (2024) ‘Racial Violence in ‘Action’: Police Storytelling and Narrativisation in the Inquiry of Jermaine Baker,’ *The British Journal of Criminology*; <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azae070>

in the racialised tropes and ‘mythological projection’² used to describe the victims and obscure the facts. Victims are often described as much bigger than they are and acting more violent than the evidence offered by eye-witnesses. In one case a tall, well-built police officer stated that his ‘knees were knocking together’ in ‘fear’ when called alongside three other officers armed with Tasers. Another described the person killed as the ‘strongest man I have ever had to deal with’. This narrative was reinforced by statements made by mental health staff at a unit, who used descriptions such as ‘full-blown raging, spitting and gnashing his teeth’ and ‘the worst patient in terms of his aggressive, violent behaviour I have had for a long time’. These are the fictions required to maintain a narrative of police innocence.

Media language

The media must be understood as the means by which the agenda of the state is propagated and maintained. ‘Media hegemony’ is a perceived process through which certain values and ways of thought, promulgated through the [mass media](#), become dominant in society. Media hegemony has been presented as influencing the way in which reporters in the media – themselves subject to prevailing values and norms – select news stories and put them across. In the context of police killings, the language used by the police—in both narratives of violent incidents and killings, and within police processes and daily work—is then circulated without question by the media, who choose to stand with the state and replicate the framing of victims (i.e. including those killed) as ‘suspects’, while officers claim to have been ‘under threat’, or even ‘traumatised’.

Character assassinations of the victims of police killings, their families, and their communities pervade the narratives of the mainstream media. These narratives become accepted as self-evident, and are normalised by the public and state. They work to maintain a version of the world which limits radical imaginations of alternative futures. These versions of the world form the basis of how the perception of the police is simplified, how this perception is contained, and how it endures without

²Carson Cole Athur, (2024) ‘Live and let live: the mythological projection of police in the killing of Chris Kaba’; <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2024/05/30/live-and-let-live-the-mythological-projection-of-police-in-the-killing-of-chris-kaba/>

criticism or challenge. This collusion is integral to the maintenance of liberalism by the state. It is pervasive, and even subsumes spaces which profess to resist and challenge the state—for example within charities and the legal system.

Within the PTPK's small sample of cases, there are numerous examples of where victims have been subjected to inaccurate representations that are racialised, dehumanising, and irrelevant to the incident of killing. Reporting will always focus on the alleged criminality of the victim and the ways in which blame can be attributed to them—for their own killing. They function to divert the public from the killing and violence of the state, and to minimise that individual's right to life.

The police are often understood as the key institution responsible for public safety. This is, of course, despite the reality of policing practice which is rife with acts of gross misconduct, racism, misogyny, violence and, ultimately, killings. Inevitably, a sample of these negative stories can surface in media reporting. However, the media consistently remain complicit in the reproduction of the constructed narratives which are offered by the police propaganda machine. The police are provided with ample opportunities to distance themselves from culpability in the context of the reporting. The opposite is offered to the affected families; they are often physically excluded and silenced, which results in the omission of counter narratives in reporting. This enables the foregrounding of the negative stereotyping, racial profiling, and misrepresentation of individuals, families and communities, ignoring or minimising the violence and harm they endure.

Language of the state

The pacifying liberal language deployed by the state is exemplified by the inquest system. This system must be understood as an effective distraction technique for the state to avoid proper legal scrutiny—as part of the same pattern and strategy applied across all cases. Details of cases are fabricated with no recourse to evidence or witness testimony. The proceeding litigation is a form of theatre in which the state

contractors all play along, using the prescribed language, and fulfilling their designated roles. It is clear to everyone that the process is a farce.

Examples of these uses of language embedded in the inquest systems include the language which legitimises medical terminology as a method of obfuscation of violence. For example, when the police strangle someone the language of “positional asphyxiation” is deployed. This sanitizes and medicalises the violence. It is an example of how power is constituted through what is considered acceptable and scientific. The “truth” is presented in such a way which ensures state power goes unchallenged.

Another example which must be interrogated in the context of the inquest system is the strategic shift in language from the creation and use of the medical diagnostic term ‘excited delirium’ to ‘acute behavioural disturbance.’ This is part of a now well-established pattern, and is a linguistic technique —applied retroactively in cases of police killings—to legitimize widespread brutality and shield police from any form of accountability. The term ‘excited delirium’ was a widely criticised, pseudoscientific term which was frequently listed as a ‘relevant factor’ for police forces to refer to after a killing or a serious injury. It was used to describe people who were acting with so-called “agitated” or “bizarre” behaviours, particularly by medical examiners who have frequently used it when assigning cause to the unexplained deaths of mostly black people after what they term police ‘interactions.’ In the UK, excited delirium was recently removed as something which can be referred to when justifying restraint. However, we must highlight how power and language are amorphous forces in the context of the so-called liberal state: medical examiners and coroners still use the same kinds of medical justifications, now termed “acute behavioural disturbance” rather than acknowledging the role of police violence in these deaths which Aisha Beliso-De Jesús describes it as a very frightening, medicalized cover-up of police violence’ which exonerates police from accountability.

The shift away from the terminology of the jury verdict of ‘unlawful killing’ is a further example of how institutions alleging to seek to reform in fact regulate, accept and

make 'function as true' certain discourses and denies others. During the 1990's when the families of the victims of police killings were able to secure inquest jury verdicts of 'unlawful killing' the public discourse began to shift, as some of the violence of the state was realised. Concerns were expressed around the increasing number of these verdicts. It was at this moment that the 'narrative conclusion' or 'narrative verdict' were introduced. This softened the language and removed the implication of state violence which was implied by the previous verdicts.

Language of Collusion Supporting Evidence (1)—Selected Family Cases

Christopher Alder

Christopher was a 37 year old Black British man, father of two, who was killed by Humberside Police in April 1998. Christopher required medical attention following an altercation outside a nightclub and was taken to hospital. It was from here that he was dragged outside by police officers and transported in the back of a police van where he sustained further injuries. He was left to die half naked on the police station floor as officers made racist remarks. Christopher's family have been fighting for justice since 1998.

Mouayed Bashir

Mouayed was a 29 year old Welsh-Sudanese man from Newport, South Wales who was killed by the police in February 2021. During a mental health crisis, Mouayed's parents called 999 for an ambulance but several police officers turned up, handcuffed him and restrained him until he was unresponsive. Mouayed suffered a cardiac arrest and died. Mouayed's family have been fighting for justice since 2021.

Olaseni Lewis

Seni was 23 years old when he was killed by the Metropolitan police in September 2010. He had sought help due to experiencing mental health issues and was admitted to a psychiatric ward at a London hospital. It was here that Seni was

subjected to extreme use of restraint and violence by 11 officers while in a padded cell. While handcuffed, officers used two sets of leg restraints and struck him with police batons. He was limp and in need of medical attention but was ignored, despite being in a medical setting. Senia died as a result of prolonged oxygen deprivation to the brain. Seni's family have been fighting for justice since 2010.

Leon Patterson

Leon was a 31 year old man from North London and was killed by Greater Manchester Police in November 1992. Leon was subject to 6 days of inhumane incarceration where he was neglected and subjected to treatment that amounts to torture. Leon stopped breathing, lying naked on the floor of a police cell. His body was covered in so many bruises and abrasions that he was recognisable to his twin sister. Leon's family have been fighting for justice since 1992.

Language of Collusion Supporting Evidence (2)—Use of Force Analysis

- Oral evidence

Language of Collusion Supporting Evidence (3)—Expert Witness Statement

- Oral evidence

Session 3: Terror

PTPK Position Statement on Terror

Vast in its scope, Terror with its core element of CTSD looks at the enduring impact of this violence on the mental health of families and communities, particularly on children. Families and children receive little to no support from the state in the wake of these killings. In the absence of criminal convictions—and the purely symbolic ‘investigations’ and ‘inquests’ that precede every not-guilty verdict—the bereaved are treated by the state not as people requiring or deserving of care or support, but as potential threats to the state, as suspects or political targets. They are tracked, harassed, and assaulted in the wake of these killings—both in isolated incidents and in long-term, targeted programmes of surveillance and intimidation. They witness others cycle through the very same systems of evasion, obstruction, and lies to which they have been subjected for years. The trauma they experience at the hands of the state is continuous.

We must pay attention to how the word ‘trauma’ is used, where it circulates, whose interests it serves and protects. Trauma is an evolving, contentious, and frequently weaponised term, and a shifting mental health diagnostic category. Palestinian psychiatrists have long-since argued that there here is no ‘post’ in these experiences, and criticised the upholding of Eurocentric models of mental health, particularly that of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the application of the term when referring to individuals trapped within contexts where violence and bloodshed is ongoing, repetitive, and continuous. In the context of the current genocide in Gaza there is not, and will never be, a ‘post’ to the trauma experienced.

The term PTSD was first coined in 1980, when it was entered into the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). The category was created by a group of psychiatrists seeking an adequate distinction for the extreme trauma and severe external shock experienced by war veterans following their experiences of combat, as compared to lesser forms

of trauma experienced within civilian life. Those pushing for its inclusion in the DSM were accused by conservative psychiatrists of advancing an anti-war political agenda—the term has been embroiled in highly charged political debates since its very first usage.

But PTSD, even in its most politically charged use, is intended to describe the experience of individuals responding to an isolated traumatic event—an experience in the past—with feelings of “intense fear” or helplessness. It does not, as Palestinian psychiatrist Dr. Samah Jabr argues, apply to those trapped in genocide or other forms of continuous political violence. Individual therapy alone cannot alleviate the extreme mental distress and suffering endured in these contexts—as Jabr writes, the application of these Eurocentric models “fails to imagine the relationship between mental health and the fight against coloniality.” This is not to say that individual therapy is not important, but the focus must be on historical justice and collective healing.

Given that PTSD has been both depoliticised and weaponised within public discourse, health policy, and state rhetoric—including for example the diagnosis of police officers with PTSD after they have killed—the term Continuous Traumatic Stress Disorder (CTSD) has evolved as an alternative mental health term and diagnostic category. PTSD “doesn’t work for the people of Gaza,” Jabr writes, “because the threat is very real; it is surrounding every aspect of their life. [...] What is sick, the context or the person? In Palestine, we see many people whose symptoms—unusual emotional reaction or behaviours—are a normal reaction to a pathogenic context.” While the context may be very different, the same is true for the vast number of people killed by the police every year, and specifically for their families, friends and children. These children, throughout their lives into adulthood, are denied participation in public discourse and denied a voice. Trapped in cycles of state violence and denied justice for the killing of their loved ones, individuals are both debarred from the grieving process, and continually retraumatised by the harassment they endure in their daily lives, including surveillance, targeting, and

blacklisting. What the families, and the children above all, of those killed need is not individual treatment for their suffering, but justice.

Terror Supporting Evidence (1) —Selected Family Cases

Paul Coker

Paul was aged 32 when he was killed by the Metropolitan police in South-East London in August 2005. Paul was physically restrained by several police officers at his girlfriend's home. He was transported to the station and was placed face down in a cell with his trousers around his ankles. He was neglected, denied urgent medical care and died. Paul's family have been fighting for justice since 2005.

Joy Gardner

Joy was killed by the Metropolitan police in her home in North London, in front of her 5-year-old son Graeme. Officers entered Joy's home by force, restrained her, placed a body belt across her waist that came with manacles attached, cuffed her and bound her thighs and ankles with two leather belts. The officers then wrapped 13 feet of two-inch-wide surgical tape around her mouth and she died. Joy's family have been fighting for justice since 1993.

Henry Hicks

Henry was killed by the Metropolitan Police in 2014, aged just 18 years old. Henry was systematically harassed by the police in the lead up to his death, with a recorded 156 stop and searches, with no convictions. On the day the police went in pursuit of Henry, as he rode his moped not far from his home, they failed to indicate to Henry that they wished him to stop and had not received authorisation to embark on the pursuit. He died shortly after impact of a crash. Henry's family have been fighting for justice since 2014.

Terror Supporting Evidence (2)—Use of Force Analysis

- Oral evidence

Terror Supporting Evidence (3)—Expert Witness Statement

- Oral evidence

Session 4: State Cover-up

PTPK Position Statement on State Cover-up

The Peoples Tribunal rejects the British government's current inquest system as a way of responding to police killings.

At minimum, we demand criminal trials against suspects.

For decades the British government and police have dictated the terms of justice and in most cases succeeded to cover up their crimes. The inquest system has been key to this. State corruption is repeatedly laid out bare during inquests: destruction and tampering with evidence, collusion in police statements, the misframing and control of knowledge that is exercised by judges, spying and intimidation tactics against families and those exposing the truth.³ Despite decades of attempts to engage in reform with this system, inquests and public Inquiries have failed to prevent the next killing.

The inquest system has acted as 'legal containment'. By this we mean the system continues to work well to protect the police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Home Office, security services, and the government of the day. The police continue to operate with a belief in their own righteousness, rendering the public rightless. Just like they find protection in their ranks, they also find protection in this system. A broken system where police and custody doctors have access to unlimited

³E.g. <https://amp.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/28/secret-tribunal-claims-police-spied-northern-ireland-journalists> and <https://amp.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/01/officers-accused-of-spying-on-sister-of-man-who-died-in-police-custody-cleared>

public funds and private monies to protect themselves, and families are in the most part blocked from legal aid.

Public Inquiries are controlled by the government. This decision was made by Tony Blair and the Labour government with the Inquiries Act 2005. It gives the government control over what evidence is allowed into the frame and what information is allowed to be public. This move was prompted by the Stevens Inquiries (1990-2003) and the Cory Inquiry in 2003. They exposed evidence of collusion between the former Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) police force, loyalist armed paramilitary groups, British army and British security service, in murdering scores of people in Northern Ireland (the British occupied 6 counties of Ireland).

By design this entire system has drained unimaginable effort, energy, resources and time out of the bereaved in their pursuit of justice. It has drained health and life. It has isolated families in their individual cases, to try and prevent us joining the dots. By design, it has tried hard to prevent us from coming together to imagine and demand something radically better.

Since the late 1960s, at least 3000 people have been killed at the hands of police across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In the aftermath, Inquest judges and juries have listened to evidence of criminal wrongdoing by the police. Yet in only a few cases, has an inquest judge or jury returned a verdict of 'unlawful killing'.

The publication of numbers of 'deaths in custody' and the vague language used gives the illusion of transparency. It has popularised terminology in media coverage, Inquiries and with liberal campaigners that deliberately obfuscates the violence of the police in causing these deaths. This is echoed in the way that the strongest possible verdict given at an inquest is still the vague and bureaucratic 'unlawful killing' that underplays police violence. Even the strongest terms of the legal system obscure, cover up and give impunity to the fact of police killings.

Britain's Crown Prosecution Service has mounted murder or manslaughter prosecutions against police on very few occasions and the rate of successful

conviction is miniscule.⁴ Typically officers have been acquitted, cases have collapsed, murder charges have been dropped. These have often been followed by reinstatements and compensation to the officer. In the North of Ireland, police have been allowed to resign after arrest and hide their professions in the courtroom.⁵

There is very real government resistance to change. Most recently in 2024, Sergeant Martyn Blake stood trial for the murder of Chris Kaba in 2022. Although acquitted, the case generated immediate retaliation from the government and police. The Labour Party opened a review into the legal thresholds for inquests, including whether the threshold to reach an 'unlawful killing' verdict needs to be higher. To lead it, they appointed the former police commissioner Tim Godwin (Met Commissioner during the 2011 uprisings that followed the police's murder of Mark Duggan).

The Home Secretary Yvette Cooper also announced that firearms officers facing trial over shootings would receive the protection of anonymity unless they are convicted⁶, as part of a package of reform measures related to police accountability, and following backlash from the Police Federation and other police interest groups over the choice to reveal Blake's identity to the public. This followed a public walkout of a hundred firearms officers when the decision to charge Blake for murder was announced in 2023⁷.

In 2023 the Tory party passed The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 to ban any more civil cases or inquests related to killings in the North of Ireland from the 1960s-1990s, which would include killings by police. In September 2024 the Northern Ireland Appeal Court found that the Act did not comply with human rights. On their election ticket the Labour Party promised to repeal the Act and return to the previously agreed position. At the time of writing British

⁴1986: Sergeant Alywn Sawyer convicted of manslaughter for killing Henry Foley. (7 year sentence)

2021: PC Benjamin Monk convicted of manslaughter for killing Dalian Atkinson. (8 year sentence)

2021: PC Wayne Couzens convicted of rape and murder of Sarah Everard. (life sentence)

⁵<https://web.archive.org/web/20181104051004/https://www.tyronetimes.co.uk/news/the-police-were-there-to-protect-you-not-shoot-you-benburb-family-speaks-out-40-years-after-father-s-murder-1-7379561>

Note: Northern Ireland's Director of Public Prosecutions has never instigated a prosecution for a police killing. In 1977, an RUC officer William McCaughey was prosecuted for the murder of William Strathearn, but he was not treated as a police officer.

⁶ [Firearms officers to get anonymity in shooting legal proceedings - Cooper - BBC News](#)

⁷ [Met police request support from army after officers down firearms | Metropolitan police | The Guardian](#)

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Hilary Benn has backtracked on these promises and is making moves to protect the government's veto to vet and redact family reports prior to their disclosure.

These actions are part of continued efforts to protect the perpetrators of state sanctioned murder in the North of Ireland, including police officers who colluded with armed paramilitaries, the British secret service and army to murder, bomb, kidnap and torture people with reassurance of state protection that continues to this day.⁸

In a failed inquest system, families in England and Wales have been encouraged to place their trust in the inquest investigations of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). The history of the IPCC and IOPC themselves and the policing accountability models that preceded them is also a history of managed containment and capture of resistance to the police by the state.

In 1985 the Police Complaints Board (PCB) was dissolved and the new Police Complaints Authority (PCA) was set up, following the recommendations of the 1981 Scarman report into the 1981 Brixton uprisings - a working class black rebellion against police violence. The Scarman report found that there was a disproportionate and indiscriminate use of 'stop and search' powers by the police against black people and recommended changes in the training and recruitment of police officers.

The PCA faced much of the same criticism as its predecessor and was condemned for the failures of the police investigation into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993. The 1999 MacPherson report into Lawrence's death found the Metropolitan Police to be "institutionally racist" and showed that in their search for justice the family had faced many failures from a complaints system that shielded officers from scrutiny. In the following years, evidence has emerged to show extensive police corruption in the investigation and the deployment of undercover officers to spy on the Lawrence family's campaign for justice and attempt to smear and discredit them.

⁸ See investigations into the Glenanne Gang - implicated in mass murder since the 1970s. The gang contained active police officers and operated with the knowledge of senior police. See Barron Reports 2003, Cassel Report 2006, and Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Ireland by Anne Cadwalladar (2013).
<https://www.patfinucanecentre.org/glenanne-lethal-allies>

More recently a former undercover officer revealed smear campaigns are a “security service job” for MI5, during a session of the Undercover Policing Inquiry⁹.

Following the MacPherson report, the IPCC was formed in 2004. It was supposed to be the first properly independent police watchdog. The IPCC was the public body responsible for overseeing the system for handling the ‘most serious’ complaints against police forces in England and Wales, including those where someone has died following police contact. The IPCC was hoped to be more independent and better equipped with the powers to investigate ‘deaths in custody’. The Commission consisted of investigators who could supervise police complaints and independently investigate the most serious cases themselves. A significant amount of IPCC investigators were former police officers¹⁰.

The task of the IPCC was to increase public confidence in the way that complaints against police were handled, and subsequently public confidence in policing itself¹¹. In practice, the new IPCC perpetuated many of the same failings of the PCA. The total lack of accountability for police killings, inadequate investigations, mismanagement blamed on a lack of funding and resources, as well as favouritism and protection for the police were all too inevitable given the organisation’s stated purpose of maintaining confidence in policing. This purpose took priority over justice and due process.

In 2018, after more police murders, yet another new body was formed, the IOPC. Like the IPCC before it, the IOPC was stated to be truly independent and better equipped with powers to investigate and hold officers accountable, yet it has also shown itself to be not fit for purpose.

With the Good Friday Agreement (1998) in the North of Ireland, a new police force - the Police Service of Northern Ireland (‘PSNI’) was established in place of the RUC.

⁹[Former police officer says smearing people is ‘security service job’ | News | Independent TV](#)

¹⁰ 7 out of 22 (31.8%) Operations Managers, 16 out of 68 Investigators (23.5%) and 38 out of 218 (17%) of Lead Investigators according to a FOI acquired in 2017. See:

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/ipcc_investigators_and_their_qua/response/976975/attach/3/Wilby%20N%20FOI%20response%20letter%20090517.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1

¹¹ https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/APCC_IPCC_Protocol.pdf

The PSNI established the Historical Enquiries Team ('HET') which took an investigative role into killings between 1960s-1990s. The unit was staffed by retired police and soldiers. It was ultimately disbanded after a damning inspection and challenges by human rights campaigners.¹²

We are seeing the same state mechanisms play out again and again that have purposefully diverted and failed families in their search for justice. The history of the last few decades shows a cycle of reports, inquiries with recommendations for reform and promises of a new institution. The purpose of these measures is clearly not to seek accountability but to create the illusion of progress and justice in order to maintain consent for policing and hamper radical resistance, as well as the truth.

Today, the British government, media and liberal campaigners alike are using statistics on police killings for England and Wales from 1990 onward. The Home Office's move to release figures publicly was largely forced by The Institute of Race Relations release of 'Deadly Silence: Black Deaths in Custody'- 'the first comprehensive study in Britain on how black people have died in the custody of the police, prisons and special hospitals' that was published the previous year.

What about the victims before 1990? These government figures also chop and separate lethal custody violence into categories - a move that only serves to underplay the scale of violence.

The terms of current justice mechanisms are set and controlled by the British state with a clear investment in covering up police killings. Liberal charities and NGOs are complicit in upholding these systems by continuing to direct energy down these institutional pathways. We must accept that continuing to participate in these mechanisms is to participate in the managed containment of our movements and each loved one's right to genuine truth and justice.

Instead together we can choose to imagine and demand something better.

¹²

<https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publications/hmic-inspection-of-the-historical-enquiries-team/>
https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/time_to_deal_with_the_past_0.pdf

State Cover-up Supporting Evidence (1)—Selected Family Cases

Kingsley Burrell

Kingsley was a 29 year old father when he was killed by West Midlands Police in March 2011. Kingsley called the police for protection, having been concerned about potential violence from two men in a shop while he was with his son. He was subjected to violence from the police, which his son witnessed, before he was detained under the Mental Health Act. Three days after Kingsley was detained, during which he endured further violence, hospital staff called the police who forcibly applied restraints. Kingsley was cut above his eye and was taken to a hospital for treatment. Kingsley's head was covered with a hospital blanket, and he was left face-down in a secure room before being treated. After treatment and with his head still covered, Kingsley was taken to another mental health unit, where police used excessive force to remove the restraints. Shortly after, he suffered a cardiac arrest and died. Kingsley's family have been fighting for justice since 2011.

Rashan Charles

Rashan was a 20-year old Black young man and the father of a daughter. He was killed by the Metropolitan police in July 2017. Rashan was in a shop when he was grabbed by an officer from behind, without warning. The officer was assisted by another man, alleged to be a member of the public, to restrain Rashan to the ground, with force and for a prolonged period, before handcuffing his limp, unresponsive body. He died at the scene. Rashan's family have been fighting for justice since 2017.

Kebba Jobe

Kebba is the cousin of Ibrahima Sey who was killed by the police in Ilford in 1994 and was part of fighting for justice alongside his family. Kebba was 42, when he was killed by a plain-clothed Metropolitan police officer by Camden canal lock one afternoon in May 2004. Two officers attempted to arrest Kebba, and another man.

Kebba was restrained face down where the officer placed a knee on his back. Kebba was struggling to breath and witnesses passing urged the officer to release him. Kebba suffered a fit while being restrained and backup was called, then an ambulance, he was taken to a local hospital where further attempts to resuscitate failed. Kebba's family have been fighting for justice since 2004.

Sean Rigg

Sean Rigg was a 40 year old Black man, experiencing a mental health crisis when he was killed by the Metropolitan police August 2008. Sean was restrained by four officers in the street, restrained face down for 8 minutes, handcuffed, and put in the back of a police van. During the journey, Sean's health deteriorated, and he was not fully conscious when he was removed from the police van. He was left unattended and unmonitored, while unresponsive, for ten minutes and an officer claimed he was 'faking it'. Sean was carried to the caged entrance of the custody suite and left for a further 25 minutes on the floor, handcuffed and unresponsive. The medical officer was eventually called, examining him a further ten minutes later and found his heart had stopped. Sean's family have been fighting for justice since 2008.

State Cover-up Supporting Evidence (2)—Use of Force Analysis

- Oral evidence

State Cover-up Supporting Evidence (3)—Expert Witness Statement

- Oral evidence

Session 5: Black Resistance

PTPK Position Statement on Black Resistance

The first recorded death at the hands of the police in Britain occurred in Leeds, when David Oluwale was found drowned in the river after being chased by the police. In

the investigation that followed it was discovered that David, a Black man, had been harassed and terrorised by two white police officers, Inspector Geoffrey Ellerker and Sergeant Mark Kitching, who had then assaulted and hounded David just before he died. David had lived in fear of the assaults, and no witnesses came forward to testify as to how he ended up drowning. The Oluwale case went to trial and other police officers testified to the hatred and brutality that Ellerker and Kitching had inflicted on David over a number of years. This persecution included beatings and urinating on him as he lay on the floor. The judge did not allow the jury to consider a verdict of manslaughter but the officers were jailed. This was the first time officers were convicted of charges relating to a death. Fifty years later with more than 3000 deaths now recorded there have been very few prosecutions of the police, and only three of them successful. The question is why?

Looking at the Oluwale case the fact that police officers spoke against each other in court clearly shook the state. The police have since ensured this can never happen again by building a culture of impunity within the police force to ensure officers are more loyal to each other than they are to the truth. The courts have made sure that there were very few prosecutions by preventing these cases going to trial. Instead, the families are forced to go through what is called the inquest system—a lesser court that cannot make criminal judgements. The media have made sure this has not happened again by prioritising and protecting the police point of view as the dominant narrative. It is also very normal for the press to blame the victim for their own death by assassinating their character. In this sense everyone is killed twice—once by police violence, and once by words and images that try to convince the public that this person is responsible for their own death, just by being in contact with the police. It is a story that many people believe in for their own sense of security. Yet in spite of all this, of the thousands of deaths, of the 50 years of state violence, people are fighting for justice, and this fight is led by black people.

These were individual cases, but during the late 1990s the families of the victims of the most controversial deaths at the hands of the police came together to form the United Families and Friends Campaign. At this stage many of the most violent

deaths were of black people. UFFC is a coalition of families and friends of those that have died at the hands of police and prison officers as well as those who are killed in immigration detention and secure psychiatric hospitals. It included 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, Lloyd Butler, Azelle Rodney, Sean Rigg, Habib Ullah, David Emmanuel (aka Smiley Culture), Kingsley Burrell, Demetre Fraser, Mark Duggan, Olaseni Lewis, James Herbert, Thomas Orchard, Sheku Bayoh, Amy El-Keria, Darren Neville, Jason McDonald, Mzee Mohammed, Marc Cole, Rashan Charles, Adrian McDonald, Edson Da Costa and many others.

The UFFC was formed in 1996 by Brenda Weinberg, sister of Brian Douglas who died though assault by a deadly blow to his head by a police baton in London in May 1995 and Myrna Simpson—the mother of Joy Gardner, who suffocated to death during police restraint in 1993. They were supported by filmmaker and activist Ken Fero from Migrant Media, and community activist Minkah Adofo from the African People's Liberation Front. Their simple, but militant idea was to unite the families to strengthen each other and fight the state. They sought to unite the families and this is what happened. As the years went on they were joined by many other families who were campaigning for their own cases. This included Stephanie Lightfoot-Bennett, whose brother Leon Patterson was killed in Stockport police station, in 1992 and Janet Alder, the sister of Christopher Alder, who was killed by police officers in Hull in April 1999.

Black resistance is at the forefront of the movement because racism is at the core of the high-profile cases. Resistance to oppression of global majority residents has a long history based on community activism in many areas as well as internationalism and anti-imperialism. Black led resistance in the UK has manifested itself in many ways for decades, there have been victories as well as defeats but the ability of people to fight for justice is undiminished. Today the issue of class needs to be centred in the approach to resist and the expansion of UFFC to include white

working class families whose loved ones have been killed is essential to building the resistance, the struggle and movement to create a critical mass.

Black Resistance Supporting Evidence (1)—Selected Family Cases

Brian Douglas

Brian was a 33 year old Black man, and father, who was killed by the Metropolitan police in May 1995. Two officers attacked Brian and his friend in South London, during which he was struck on the head with a baton from behind, fracturing his skull. Brian was taken to the police station and was clearly unwell, vomiting and slipping in and out of consciousness. It was 15 hours before Brian received any medical attention and was transferred to a local hospital. He died five days later from a fractured skull and damage to his brain stem. Brian's family have been fighting for justice since 1995.

Jason McPherson

Jason was a 25-year old Black man and loved son and brother who was killed by the Metropolitan police in January 2007. Jason was travelling with two friends when they were subjected to stop and search as part of an operation to try and detect unknown offenders and potential crimes in designated areas. The stop and search uncovered nothing, and Jason was not identified as a suspect, yet the decision was made to take him to Notting Hil police station for a more thorough search. Officers used brutal force, pinning down his legs and administering blows to his body. Jason's mum called during this time and heard Jason say; 'I can't breath' and another voice say 'he's dying'. Jason had a fit and was bleeding on the floor when he was then taken to a local hospital where he died. Jason's family have been fighting for justice since 2007.

Adrian McDonald

Adrian was a 34 year old Black British man, and father, from Huddersfield when he was killed by Staffordshire police in December 2014. Adrian was tasered and attacked by police dogs. Adrian's family have been fighting for justice since 2014.

Black Resistance Supporting Evidence (2)—Use of Force Analysis

- Oral evidence

Black Resistance Supporting Evidence (3)—Expert Witness Statement

- Oral evidence

10. Use of Force

The PTPK has used its own use of force expert to forensically examine the evidence of each case from a range of sources but primarily from the statements of every police officer who had first and direct contact with the victim. These statements were supplemented by available CCTV evidence in some cases.

Our expert was able to scrutinise these cases - which were deemed by the state not to be worthy of prosecution, to not be in the public interests to prosecute or to not reach the required level of proof for a conviction - and make an assessment on whether the use of force was applied to legal standard. The analysis delivered was used to assess whether there was enough evidence of the crimes of murder or manslaughter committed by police officers in these cases.

UK law currently allows the police to use what they term 'reasonable force, when necessary, in order to carry out their role of law enforcement'. In England and Wales the use of force is provided to police and any other person under Section 3 of the Criminal Law Act 1967, which states: "A person may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances in the prevention of crime, or in effecting or assisting in the lawful arrest of offenders or suspected offenders or of persons unlawfully at large".

The UK police force alleges that officers are guided by their 'Ten Key Principles Governing the Use of Force by the Police Service', alongside 'three core questions' which are:

- 1) Would the use of force have a lawful objective (e.g., the prevention of injury to others or damage to property, or the effecting of a lawful arrest) and, if so, how immediate and grave is the threat posed?
- 2) Are there any means, short of the use of force, capable of attaining the lawful objective identified?
- 3) Having regard to the nature and gravity of the threat, and the potential for adverse consequences to arise from the use of force (including the risk of escalation and the exposure of others to harm) what is the minimum level of force required to attain the objective identified, and would the use of that level of force be proportionate or excessive?

In reality, these alleged 'core questions' and 'key principles' are ignored. They are a cover that enables the police to act with impunity.

11. Legacies

The motivations that have driven the formation of the People's Tribunal are rooted in the desire to unify struggles, to reject political containment, and to pay tribute to those that have fought—but also to build an organisation run by the generations of victims who grow up with the immense burden, as well as the anger, of the death of their loved ones. This inspiration to organise began in France. On October 28, 1982, Wahid Hachichi, 18, a student from Vaulx-en-Velin, was shot and killed by police in Lyon. On November 6, Abdennbi Guemiah, 19, a student from Nanterre, was shot dead by a neighbour. The families and friends of Wahid and Abdennbi met with others to organise. They declared themselves 'Les Folles le Place Vendôme' (The Mothers of Place Vendôme) in reference to the mothers of the 'Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo' (The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo) in Argentina, who drew international attention to the fate of their missing children—the student victims of the

dictatorship—by protesting on a regular basis. The connection between the Place de Mayo to the Les Folles le place Vendôme inspired the formation of the United Families and Friends Campaign (UFFC), the coalition of the families of people killed by the police in the 1990s in the UK. The political position of the ‘Les Folles le place Vendôme’ on empowerment of families strongly influenced the UFFC, as captured in Injustice (Fero & Mehmood, 2001). Now the People’s Tribunal on Police Killings continues that struggle. This legacy—that is both personal from the point of the families and political from the point of view of the movement—is international in its approach and is built on an obstinate memory that nothing can destroy.

12. Further Actions

We plan for the findings and verdicts of the People’s Tribunal to act as a launchpad for future legal and campaigning actions. The Tribunal is therefore not a standalone event but the first step in a longer process which will, we hope, advance the families’ struggle for justice, accountability and systemic change in both national and international, criminal and civil law settings.

13. Supporting Testimonies

We will also hear live testimonies from the families of:

Aseta Simms

In May 1971, at the age of 50 years old, Aseta was killed in Stoke Newington police station. Her daughter, Pamela Simms, saw her body at the funeral parlour. Her face was covered in bruises with severe bruising around her temple. The police reported, however, that she died by ‘lethal alcohol poisoning’ and characterised her as ‘violently drunk.’ The police changed their story about the circumstances of her death in a number of ways, initially stating that there was a bottle of whisky at the scene before changing it to say it was on her person. They claimed that they did not know Aseta Simms prior to her death but Pamela affirms she was well known to the police, who terrorised her regularly. Aseta’s family have been fighting for justice since 1971.

Azelle Rodney

Azelle Rodney was shot and killed by an armed officer of the Metropolitan Police on 30 April 2005. Anthony Long, his killer, took just six hundredths of a second to open fire on him in a police operation to foil an attempted robbery. Azelle was shot 6 times in total, 4 times in the head. A verdict of unlawful killing was brought nine years after his death, and then firearms officer Anthony Long stood trial for murder. He was acquitted. Azelle was the third person that Long had killed at that stage. Azelle's family have been fighting for justice since 2005.

Devonte Scott

Devonte Scott, 18, died following a police pursuit on 16th May 2021. Devonte suffered an "unsurvivable" head injury in the incident. Detective Sergeant Marie Eldred, of Greater Manchester Police's Serious Collision Investigation Unit, told the inquest that the Fiesta was reported stolen on April 21, 2021. However, she said there was no evidence to suggest Devonte was responsible for the theft. The Inquest concluded he died as a result of a road traffic collision, despite the chase. The police officers who chased a vehicle before it crashed, killing the teenage driver, have been cleared of blame by the IOPC. Devonte's family have been fighting for justice since 2021.

Kevin Clarke

Kevin Clarke, a 35-year-old Black man, was experiencing a mental health crisis in Lewisham, South London, in March 2018. He was violently restrained by up to nine police officers and later died in Lewisham hospital. An inquest into Mr Clarke's death heard he told officers "I'm going to die" and "I can't breathe" as he was put into two sets of handcuffs along with leg restraints. The IOPC found that two police constables should face gross misconduct hearings for alleged breaches of the police standards of professional behaviour relating to duties and responsibilities, for failing to provide an appropriate level of care to Mr Clarke, and for honesty and integrity. The officers were cleared of gross misconduct and said they never heard Clarke say that he could not breathe. Kevin's family have been fighting for justice since 2018.

Liam Phillips

Liam Phillips, died after the Ford Escort car they were travelling in collided with a BMW in the early hours of 27 December, 2016. The car was being followed by a marked Essex Police vehicle at the time. An Essex Police press release said that Liam possessed class A drugs, a claim which was entirely untrue, which the police later changed. The IPCC also found there was "no indication of misconduct" by the officers involved in the pursuit despite the fact the police engaged in the car chase without any substantial provocation. Liam died in hospital of his injuries and his best friend, Reigan, was killed instantly. The boys were 17 years old. Liam's family have been fighting for justice since 2016.

Ronaldo Johnson

Ronaldo Johnson was a 17-year-old Black teenager who was killed by Greater Manchester police in April 2021. Ron, as he was fondly known, was the passenger in a car when a police officer decided to go in pursuit of it. The police car reached speeds of 65mph, in a 30mph zone, leading the car to collide with a taxi at an intersection. The officer did not attend to Ronaldo who was trapped in the car and decided to chase the driver of the car who had fled on foot. Ronaldo suffered life-threatening injuries as a result of the crash and died in hospital 6 days later. Ronaldo's family have been fighting for justice since 2021.

Shekuh Bayoh

Sheku Bayoh died after he was restrained, face down, by up to nine police officers who were called to Hayfield Road in Kirkcaldy, Fife, on May 3, 2015. They subjected him to CS spray, pepper spray, batons, handcuffs and leg restraints. Sheku lost consciousness within a few minutes and died. His body was covered from top to bottom in bruises and lacerations, he had a fractured rib with petechial haemorrhages in his eyes - a sign of asphyxiation. The Crown Office decided not to take legal action against the police officers involved in the incident following an investigation. A public inquiry began in Edinburgh in November 2022 and has cost more than £20m, it includes an examination of whether race was a contributing

factor to his death. Mr Bayoh, who was 31, left behind a partner and two young sons. Shekuh's family have been fighting for justice since 2015.

Harry Stanley

Harry was a Scottish painter and decorator living in Hackney, East London who was shot dead by the Metropolitan police in September 1999. Harry was returning home from the pub one evening carrying a plastic bag which contained a table leg that his brother had repaired and returned to him. Someone called the police to report 'an Irishman with a gun wrapped in a bag'. An Inspector and officer in an armed response vehicle challenged Harry from behind. As he turned, they shot him dead at a distance of 15 feet. The officers were arrested for murder, but the CPS decided not to prosecute. Harry's family have been fighting for justice since 1999.

Trevor Brecknell

Trevor was shot dead in a bar in south Armagh, just across the border in Northern Ireland, in December 1975. He was originally from England and had been out celebrating the birth of his son. The attack was claimed by the Red Hand Commando, a small secretive Ulster loyalist paramilitary group, but local people have consistently alleged security force collusion. Trevor's family have been fighting for justice since 1975.

Souheil El Khalfaoui

This Tribunal is hearing from the family of Souheil El Khalfaoui in solidarity with families in France who we unite with.

In August 2021, Souheil, 19, was shot and killed by a police officer in training during a traffic stop in Marseille. He was backing up the car during the stop, but there is no evidence that he endangered anyone. The internal police investigation had numerous problems: CCTV footage from four cameras at nearby businesses have been lost, some key witnesses were never questioned, and the officer was not arrested immediately but was allowed to go free right after the killing. The police officer who killed, Romain Devassine, had participated in the Paris Olympics

ceremony, showing off his BMX skills for audiences around the world live on TV. Souheil's family have been fighting for justice since 2021.

14. Glossary

Abolition: Abolitionism recognises that policing, prisons, border detention centres and similar institutions maintain racial capitalism; they cause harm to individuals and communities and do not keep people safe. Abolition is the collective practice of building safer communities by dismantling harmful institutions and creating new ways to prevent harm and to heal people and communities.

Coroner: (England and Wales, Northern Ireland) This is a legally qualified role, appointed by the state, responsible for holding an Inquest (see below) where the death was:

15. Sudden and of unknown cause

16. In prison or police custody

17. Suspected to be a suicide

The coroner's role in Northern Ireland is similar to that in England and Wales.

CPS: (England and Wales) The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutes criminal cases that have been investigated by the police and other investigative organisations in England and Wales. Only the CPS can bring criminal (as opposed to civil) cases. While the CPS claims it is independent of the police and government, it is a state institution supervised by the Attorney General, who reports to the Prime Minister. When deciding whether or not to bring a prosecution the CPS (see above) will consider whether the prosecution is likely to succeed and whether it is in the public interest. Both of these criteria are highly contestable.

CTSD: Continuing Traumatic Stress Disorder (Covered in the evidence area on Terror)

DPP: The Director of Public Prosecutions is the head of the CPS. The current Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, was a former DPP (2008-2013)

ECHR: European Convention on Human Rights

ECHR: European Court of Human Rights.

Home Secretary: Senior cabinet member responsible for law enforcement (policing), immigration and oversight of MI5 (domestic security service).

House of Lords: Unelected house of the UK Parliament

ICC: International Criminal Court

IOPC: (England and Wales) Independent Office of Police Conduct (2018-current), preceded by the IPCC. It oversees the system for handling complaints against police forces in England and Wales. Most complaints are handled by the police service involved, with the IOPC providing oversight, unless the allegation is serious or criminal misconduct by officers. The IOPC was the subject of a [damning parliamentary report](#) in 2022.

IPCC: Independent Police Complaints Commission (2004-2017). Preceded by the PCA, succeeded by the IOPC.

Inquest: (England and Wales, Northern Ireland) Inquests are held by a Coroner (see above) to answer:

- Identity of the deceased
- Place of death
- Time of death
- How the deceased came by their death

Whilst giving the appearance of establishing the truth, the reality is that the Inquest becomes a legal battleground with lawyers aiming to protect their clients from further legal action. The police, medical staff and others involved in the killing will have their legal representation paid for, usually from the public purse. The family have to fund their legal representation themselves.

Inquiry: a government-initiated investigation into controversial issues or events of national concern, or policy. Notable here is the inquiry into the killing of Stephen Lawrence (d.1993), which, as well as finding that the Metropolitan Police investigation was incompetent, also found the force to be 'institutionally racist'. Subsequent governments have downplayed or rejected the idea of institutional racism, preferring to blame 'a few bad apples'. However, the Baroness Casey Review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police report in 2023 found the Metropolitan force to be 'institutionally racist, sexist and homophobic'.

MP: Member of the elected house (House of Commons) of the UK Parliament.

MI5: British security service responsible for domestic counter-intelligence.

PCA: Police Complaints Authority (1985-2003), which was succeeded by the IPCC.

People's Tribunal: Most people's tribunals are organised to hold states accountable for violations of international law by building public awareness and generating a legitimate evidence record. People's tribunals empower victims, allowing their voices to be heard and recording their stories. The form of the Tribunal depends on its objectives—some Tribunals are comparable to truth commissions, while others parallel formal court procedures. People's Tribunals are not constrained by established power structures thus, they do not have formal legal authority; rather, they derive their power from the public character of the proceedings, the participants, and the integrity of their approach.

PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (See CTSD above)

Sectioned: This means being detained in a hospital under the Mental Health Act 1983, either for the patient's well-being and safety or the safety of others.

United Kingdom: There are variations in the legal processes between England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The cases presented from the UK are governed by the law in England and Wales.

UFFC: United Family and Friends Campaign

15. Tribunal Panel Biographies

Joy James

Joy is Ebenezer Fitch Professor of the Humanities at Williams College and is a political philosopher who works with organizers. Her books include *In Pursuit of Revolutionary Love*; *New Bones Abolition: Captive Maternal Agency and the (After)Life of Erica Garner*; and *Contextualizing Angela Davis: The Agency and Identity of an Icon*. Her edited volumes with Pluto include *Beyond Cop Cities: Dismantling State and Corporate-Funded Armies and Prisons* and *ENGAGE: Indigenous, Black, Afro-Indigenous Futures*.

Mireille Fanon Mendes France

Mireille is a literature professor, also worked at the Université Paris V-René Descartes in cognitive educability and mediation of learning and peace, particularly in conflict resolution. She has also worked for Unesco Press, INSEE and as a legal adviser to the French National Assembly. She was a visiting professor at Lehigh University in the USA. A militant and activist on international law issues, she has written numerous articles and taken part in many national and international conferences. She has been appointed expert at the United Nations on issues of institutional racism, with particular reference to people of African descent. She

initiated the creation of the Fondation Frantz Fanon. She is currently working on the issue of reparations in a decolonial perspective.

Emerson Caetano

Emerson is an expert on Human Rights and Racial Justice, advocating at the International Human Rights System for the topic of Reparative Justice for People of African Descent. He is a Master's student of International Law at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, with a bachelor's degree in International Relations at the Rio de Janeiro State University. Emerson holds a range of experiences coordinating social projects in the third sector field, having worked with the main actors of the global civil society and International Organizations such as the United Nations. Emerson Caetano is a Brazilian scholar and advocate committed to strengthening global governance and racial justice for Brazil and the world.

Tony Doherty

Tony is Chair of the Bloody Sunday Trust in Derry, which is a human rights, peace-building and civil rights legacy conservation organisation. Its signal projects are the Museum of Free Derry, a highly successful social economy initiative, and Derry Peace and Conflict International – a peace and solidarity education project reflecting on Derry-based political and human rights achievements. The Trust welcomes fact-finding and learning delegations to its doors. In the late 1980s Tony was instrumental in creating the conditions for the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign, which brought about a second public inquiry into the murders of 14 men and boys on Bloody Sunday, 30th January 1972. While its findings were far from perfect, it concluded that the deceased were innocent and that there was no legal justification for their deaths. One paratrooper, Soldier F, is due to stand trial in September 2025 for two murders and five attempted murders.

Esther Mamadou

Esther Mamadou is a human rights defender, activist, and jurist committed to the protection of the human rights of marginalized communities, particularly those of African descent. Qualified lawyer in Spain, she holds an LLM in International Law

from SOAS University. With expertise in forced migration and refugee law, Esther has, since 2004, dedicated her career to addressing the racism faced by Africans providing legal advice on migrations and international protection in countries such as Spain, the UK, Colombia, and Ecuador. In 2018, Esther co-founded [Equipo Decenio Afrodescendiente](#) to combat anti-Black racism and police violence in Spain. At the EU and UN levels, she actively advocates for racial justice as a member of the steering group for the [Equinox Racial Justice Initiative](#), where she supports the efforts to shape EU policies on racial justice. Additionally, she serves as the European coordinator for the [International Coalition for People of African Descent](#), a platform for Afro-descendant organizations in Europe and the Americas as an alternative voice in the effort to dismantle structural racism and demand reparations for the historical injustices committed against Africans.

Dr. Mona El-Farra

Dr. Mona El-Farra is a respected Palestinian physician, human rights and women's rights activist, and healthcare advocate. Based in the Gaza Strip, she has dedicated her career to improving the health and well-being of Palestinians, especially women and children, under occupation. Through her roles in various health organizations and her outspoken advocacy, Dr. El-Farra has made significant strides in bringing attention to the healthcare crises in Gaza and mobilizing international support for Palestinian health and human rights.

16. Expert Witness Biographies

Gus John—Black Resistance

Professor Gus (Augustine) John is an equality and human rights campaigner and an associate professor and honorary fellow of the UCL Institute of Education. Gus is an international consultant and executive coach and a scholar and activist, who is also an award winning author, lecturer and researcher. He is an associate professor of education and honorary fellow of the University of London (UCL) Institute of Education and Director of All Africa Advisors Ltd. As a management consultant and an educationalist, he has a deep commitment to life-long learning. He has worked internationally as an executive coach and a management and social investment

consultant since 1990's. He became the first African Director of Education and Leisure Services in Britain in 1989. He was named as one of 30 of the 'Most Influential African Diaspora Leaders' in 2016.

Asim Qureshi—Torture

Dr Asim Qureshi graduated in Law (LLB Hons, LLM), specialising in International Law. He completed his Ph.D. in International Conflict Analysis from the University of Kent. He is the Research Director at the advocacy group CAGE International, and since 2003 has specialised in investigating the impact of counterterrorism practices worldwide. He has published a wide range of NGO reports, academic journals and articles. He has written the books *Rules of the Game: Detention, Deportation, Disappearance* (Hurst, Columbia UP, 2009); *A Virtue of Disobedience* (Unbound, 2019); the editor of *I Refuse to Condemn: Resisting Racism in Times of National Security* (Manchester UP, 2020) and *When Only God Can See: The Faith of Muslim Political Prisoners* (Pluto, 2024). Since 2009, he has been advising legal teams involved in defending terrorism trials in the US and at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Gargi Bhattacharyya—Language of Collusion

Professor Gargi Bhattacharyya is Director of the Sarah Parker Remond Centre for the Study of Racism and Racialisation at University College London. Professor Bhattacharyya is the author of *Tales of dark-skinned women* (1998); *Sexuality and Society* (2002); *Dangerous Brown Men* (2008); *Traffick* (2005); *Crisis, Austerity and Everyday Life* (2015); *Rethinking Racial Capitalism* (2018); *We, the heartbroken* (2023); *The Futures of Racial Capitalism* (2023). I have also co-authored books with colleagues (and continue to believe that collaborative work is an important element of the project, despite the challenges it can bring). My collaborative works include: *Race and Power* (2001); *Go Home? Mapping Immigration Controversy* (2017); *How media and conflicts make migrants* (2020); *Empire's Endgame* (2021).

Luke Daniels—Terror

Luke Daniels is a social and political activist, an author and father to eight children. He trained as a counsellor and worked at the Everyman Centre in London with perpetrators of domestic violence. His work with perpetrators was the subject of 1994 Channel 4 documentary, Pulling The Punches. He is the author of two books on ending violence against women and girls. He is President of Caribbean Labour Solidarity and a member of Nicaragua and Venezuela solidarity executive committees. He is chair of Islington Pensioners Forum and is an active campaigner for Reparations for trans-Atlantic chattel slavery.

Paul O'Connor—State Cover-ups

Paul O'Connor is the manager at the Pat Finucane Centre in Derry, north of Ireland. The Centre has offices in Derry, Belfast and Armagh and also has a base in Dublin through its project Justice for the Forgotten and provides advocacy support to families bereaved through the political conflict on the island of Ireland. This support usually entails seeking documents and information from public bodies. Paul and other staff at the PFC have been mining the archives at the UK National Archives for many years. Paul is a graduate in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Ulster and lives in his native Derry. He has lived, worked, studied and/or volunteered in the US, Germany, Spain and Nicaragua.

Rod Charles - Use of Force

Rod Charles is a former Metropolitan Police officer, retiring in the rank of Chief Inspector after 30 years service. Beginning his career as a constable at Notting Hill, through combination of appointments and promotions subsequently served in boroughs in all four primary geographical zones and in Central London. Firearms, security co-ordinator and public order responsibilities further enhanced his experience managing incidents pan London and when deployed to various countries in Europe, to work in concert with international law enforcement agencies, to prevent adverse impact from and detect violent offenders. An advanced paralegal (Chartered Institute of Legal executives) also has a diploma in social policy and criminology.

Currently engaged as an independent investigative researcher, focusing on abuse of power.

17. International Observer

Samah Jabr

Samah Jabr is a consultant psychiatrist practicing in Palestine, serving communities in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and the former Head of the Mental Health Unit within the Palestinian Ministry of Health. She is an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences at George Washington University in Washington DC. In addition to her clinical work, Dr Jabr has dedicated over two decades to advocating on behalf of the mental healthcare of the Palestinian people, focusing on victims of torture and trauma. She is a founding member of the Palestine Global Mental Health Network and author of several books including *The Time of Genocide: Bearing Witness to a Year in Palestine*

18. Supporting Organisations

Black Jewish Alliance

Bloody Sunday Trust

Brian Douglas Justice Campaign

Bristol Copwatch

Busy Being Black

Cimaroon

Criola

End Police Pursuits Campaign

Global Afrikan Congressuk (GACuk).

Harry Stanley Memorial Campaign

Ibrahim Sey Memorial Campaign

ILPS UK (International League of Peoples Struggle)

Joy Gardner Memorial Campaign

Justice for Christopher Alder Campaign

Justice for Henry Hicks

Justice for Leon Patterson Campaign
Justice for Sheku Bayoh Campaign
London Campaign Against Police and State Violence
Muslim Social Justice Initiative
National African and Black Association
Nijjor Manush
Palestinian Youth Movement
Pan African Peoples Parliament
RMT Finsbury Park 0543 Branch
RMT's National Black and Ethnic Minority Members Advisory Committee
RMTs Black Solidarity Committee
Roger Sylvester Justice Campaign
ROT collective
RTJ Foundation
Russell Tribunal
Sisters Uncut
South Asian Solidarity Group (SASG)
Statewatch
The Marc Cole and Adrian McDonald Campaign to End Taser Torture