

UNITED FAMILIES & FRIENDS CAMPAIGN PRESS RELEASE

DEATH IN CUSTODY FAMILIES TO MARCH ON DOWNING STREET

London Saturday 29th October 2005.

Assemble 1pm at Trafalgar Square for a march and demonstration to Downing Street

The United Families & Friends Campaign - the national coalition of death in custody family campaigns - today announced its seventh annual remembrance procession. The event will see hundreds of family members of those that have died in state custody gather to remember their loved one. This year's march will also demand an end to the current 'shoot to kill' policy. A letter to this effect will be handed in to the Prime Minister.

In a statement the campaign has said: "Jean Charles de Menezes was killed by armed police inside Stockwell Tube station on 22 July. His execution brought world-wide attention to a shoot to kill policy that the Prime Minister and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner say is here to stay. We say 'NO SHOOT TO KILL' and demand an end to this brutal policy. Jean Charles was not the first victim of police shootings - Derek Bennett, Azelle Rodney, Harry Stanley and James Ashley are just some of the other people that have been shot dead on the streets of Britain. Their families continue to fight for justice. If you want to support these families. If you want to see those responsible for these killings prosecuted. If you want to defend human rights in the UK then support this procession."

Brenda Weinberg, Chair of UFFC says: "We are gathering for those we have lost at the hands of those designated to protect and serve. The continual denial of justice is another form of human rights abuse practised by this government."

Editors notes:

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

2. Aims of UFFC are:

- o Deaths in police custody must be investigated by a body that is genuinely independent of the police.
- o Prison deaths must be subject to a system of properly funded investigation that is completely independent of the Prison Service.
- o Officers involved in custody deaths be suspended until investigations are completed.

Inquest

- o Prosecutions should automatically follow 'unlawful killing' verdicts at inquests.
- o Police forces are made accountable to the communities that they serve.
- o Legal Aid and full disclosure of information be made to the relatives of the victims.
- o Officers responsible for deaths should face criminal charges, even if retired.