

PRESS RELEASE

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METROPOLITAN POLICE AUTHORITY TO DEBATE RELEASE OF THE CASS REPORT ON THE DEATH OF BLAIR PEACH

MPA full Authority

Chamber, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA
10am Thursday 25 June 2009

INQUEST will be supporting the friends and family of Blair Peach when they lobby tomorrow's meeting of the Metropolitan Police Authority at City Hall.

MPA member Jenny Jones has proposed a motion to be debated at the meeting calling on the Metropolitan Police Service to publish immediately the full report by former Commander John Cass into the death of Blair Peach in Southall in 1979. The report has remained secret to this day despite requests for disclosure by Blair's family and friends. INQUEST has also written to the Metropolitan Police Commissioner supporting the family's call for disclosure of the report and has yet to receive a reply.

Deborah Coles, Co-Director of INQUEST, said:

Public confidence in the Metropolitan Police Service continues to be undermined by the secrecy surrounding the death of Blair Peach. The whole basis on which the Cass report has been withheld from the Peach family for 30 years has been widely discredited and yet the secrecy continues. Ian Tomlinson's death at the G20 protest and the similarities between the two cases makes the need to disclose this report even more urgent and is in both the family and public interest.

It was the negative experience of Blair Peach's family and friends with the investigation and inquest system that led them to join with others to set up INQUEST in 1981. Sadly, the need for the organisation remains as urgent today. Non-disclosure of evidence has been one of the most problematic issues following deaths in custody and has seriously undermined family and public confidence in the police complaints system. The whole basis on which the Cass report has been withheld from the Peach family for 30 years has been discredited and it is accepted by government that the results of investigations into deaths following police contact are now disclosed to families.

Notes to editors:

Deborah Coles, Co-Director of INQUEST is attending the meeting with Blair Peach's brother Philip Peach and his partner Celia Stubbs.

Inquest

INQUEST is the only organisation in England and Wales that provides a specialist, comprehensive advice service on contentious deaths and their investigation to bereaved people, lawyers, other advice and support agencies, the media, parliamentarians and the wider public. Its casework priorities are deaths in prison and in police custody, in immigration detention and in secure training centres. INQUEST develops policy proposals and undertakes research to campaign for changes to the inquest and investigation process, reduce the number of custodial deaths, and improve the treatment and care of those within the institutions where the deaths occur.

INQUEST is campaigning to ensure that the Coroners and Justice Bill 2009 results in fundamental reform of an inquest system currently hampered by delay, inconsistency of approach and lack of resources and unable to fulfil its vital function of preventing unnecessary deaths.

The government must also make changes to ensure that bereaved families can participate effectively in inquest hearings by having equal access, alongside the police and Prison Service, to non means-tested public funding for their legal representation. [INQUEST's briefing on the Coroners & Justice Bill](#)



INQUEST's first book, *Death and Disorder*, published in 1986, examined deaths involving the police during - or which sparked - public disorder - Kevin Gately (who died during a protest in Red Lion Square in 1974), Blair Peach and Cynthia Jarrett, whose death during a police raid prompted the notorious Broadwater Farm disturbances in 1985 during which PC Keith Blakelock was killed. *Death and Disorder* looks at these three deaths in the context of others involving public disorder, from the infamous Peterloo Massacre of 1819 to the sometimes fatal use of troops and police against strikers in the first half of the twentieth century.

Further Information	www.inquest.org.uk
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Metropolitan Police Authority motion	
Death and Disorder	