

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release 25 June 2009

AFTER 30 YEARS REPORT INTO THE DEATH OF BLAIR PEACH TO BE DISCLOSED

Today the Metropolitan Police Authority and the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police conceded to the family's request that the full report by former Commander John Cass into the death of Blair Peach in Southall in 1979 should be disclosed, subject to any legally necessary redactions. This momentous decision followed an ongoing campaign that was given added momentum following the death of Ian Tomlinson during the G20 protests and the similarities between the two fatal incidents. Prior to the MPA meeting today, INQUEST met MPA member Jenny Jones, Blair's former partner Celia Stubbs and his brother Philip Peach to discuss the motion requesting disclosure.

Deborah Coles, Co-Director of INQUEST, said:

We welcome the lifting of the veil of secrecy surrounding this death that has undermined family and public confidence in the Metropolitan Police Service. The challenge now is to ensure that there is as full disclosure as legally possible and that reasons are given for any redactions given ongoing public concern about this process.

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:

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.

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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.

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INQUEST press release issued 24 June in advance of the debate	
Metropolitan Police Authority motion	
Death and Disorder	