



Global Afrikan Congress uk (GACuk)

Input for the preparation of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 47/21 on the “Promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers through transformative change for racial justice and equality”

GACuk is the UK Chapter of Global Afrikan Congress (GAC), an international network of organisations formed after the work by Afrikans at the UN World Conference Against Racism 2001 who successfully encouraged nation states to recognise our enslavement as a crime against humanity. Our key objective is to achieve Reparations for these crimes which still continue today, including neo-colonialism, genocide and racism.

GAC organises from the grassroots offering local, regional and international community solidarity, co-operation and empowerment. It offers organisations and Afrikans across the world the opportunity to work together in a unified fashion to demand Reparations. We aim to mobilise the human, economic, political, spiritual and cultural resources of Afrika and the Afrikan Diaspora in the interest and to the benefit of Afrika and her people.

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The term ‘Afrikan’ in this document refers to the indigenous people of Afrika and their descendants throughout the Diaspora in all corners of the world. We spell Afrika with a ‘k’ based on the following insights:

- it is a Pan-Afrikan spelling which relates both to the Afrikan continent and the Diaspora;
- it reflects the spelling of ‘Afrika’ in Afrikan languages and
- it includes the concept of ‘ka’, the vital energy which both sustains and creates life, as expressed in ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) teachings

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Firstly, GACuk would like to draw the UNHCHR’s attention to some of the recent abuses of Afrikan people by police in the uk.

Dalian Atkinson, a former professional footballer, died in 2016 after police were called to his father’s home when he was having a mental health episode.¹ His partner believed that he was a regular victim of police harassment.² He had made a successful complaint against the police a few years before his murder.

He died after he was tasered for 33 seconds, more than six times the standard practice. The police officer denied kicking him in the head but his bootlace imprint was left on Dalian’s forehead and blood on his laces. The police officers’ defence was the classic ‘fearing for their life’ one, part of the old ‘Afrikan people are big, violent and dangerous’ narrative. One police officer was found guilty of manslaughter but not murder and sentenced to 8 years in prison although the maximum available was 16 years. This is believed to be the first case since 1980 where a serving British police officer has been successfully prosecuted.

Yvonne Farrell was awarded £45,000 in damages by Hertfordshire police. They had wrongfully arrested her in 2018 while she was sat in her partner’s car waiting for it to be towed. The police took her clothes when she refused to give them her name. They refused to replace them with clothes appropriate for a Rastafarian woman so she sat naked in a cell for 3 hours.³

Child Q in December 2020 was 15 years old and menstruating when she was strip searched at school by 2 female Metropolitan Police officers. She had been accused of smelling of cannabis by a teacher as she sat a mock examination. She was removed from the exam room and the police called when teachers found nothing in her bag, blazer, scarf or shoes.

No appropriate adult⁴ was present when she was strip searched and made to expose her private parts. Neither the school nor the police told her parents what had happened. No drugs were found. ‘The victim - referred to as Child Q - told the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: "On top of preparing for the most important exams of my life, I can't go a single day without wanting to scream, shout, cry or just give up."’⁵

‘Child Q returned home after the event, and her mother took her to the family GP who referred her for psychological support. Child Q's mother told the review that it makes her sick that her child "had to take her sanitary towel off and put the same dirty towel back on because they would not allow her to use the restroom to clean herself". She told the review that she believed the incident was treated as a "criminal matter", her daughter was treated "as an adult", and the events happened because of the colour of her daughter's skin.’⁶

The officers were only removed from frontline duties in March 2022 after public protests.⁷ The teacher was allegedly sacked in March 2022⁸, again only after public protests.

¹ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/pc-who-killed-dalian-atkinson-jailed>

² <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/dalian-atkinsons-grieving-girlfriend-says-24405740>

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/feb/02/police-apologise-after-rastafarian-woman-left-naked-in-cell-after-wrongful-arrest>

⁴ <https://www.appropriateadult.org.uk>

⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-60766891>

⁶ <https://www.mylondon.news/news/south-london-news/teacher-sacked-after-calling-police-23438837>

⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-60858196>

⁸ <https://www.voice-online.co.uk/news/uk-news/2022/03/20/child-q-teacher-sacked-after-calling-police-on-black-schoolgirl>

'A safeguarding report on the incident concluded it was unjustified and racism was "likely" to have been a factor.⁹ Hackney Council's mayor and deputy mayor have condemned the "humiliating, traumatising and utterly shocking treatment" by police officers. They have asked for a report in six to nine months on progress made regarding the review's eight findings and 14 recommendations.¹⁰

It is believed that adultification¹¹ meant that Child Q was not treated as a potential victim of County Lines or other drug dealing. Some other police forces would have dealt with the situation differently, eg Sussex Police reports to their community scrutiny panels show that they would have treated Child Q as a victim of crime so no strip search would have taken place; a guardian would have been informed that there had been contact with the police and youth support agencies would have been engaged to try to divert a victim away from crime.

'Of the 5,279 children searched in the past three years, 3,939 (75%) were from ethnically diverse backgrounds. A total of 16 of them were aged between 10 and 12 years old.'¹² Also worrying is that cases like that of Child Q do not appear in this Metropolitan Police data as she was not arrested. The National Education Union (NEU) says they no longer want police in schools. "I know a place where 11 in 12 toilets tested positive for cocaine. It's a place where there is a 24-hour police presence. It's called the Houses of Parliament. Why are [the Met] strip-searching children and not strip-searching MPs?" asked Daniel Kebede, NEU president.¹³

Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman were murdered after celebrating Ms Henry's birthday in a local park in June 2020. The police refused to act when the sisters were reported missing. Friends and family realised that they needed to search for the sisters and their bodies were found the next day by Ms Henry's partner. Two police officers who were meant to be keeping the crime scene safe instead decided to contaminate that space so they could take pictures of the sisters and post them on WhatsApp groups with offensive comments.¹⁴ 'The men disregarded the victims' privacy for "a cheap thrill" or "some form of bragging rights", which undermined trust and faith in the police, the judge said.' They were both jailed for 33 months.

Sarah Everard was raped and murdered by an off duty police officer in March 2021.¹⁵ He was believed to have used his warrant card to persuade her to get into his car, claiming he was arresting her for a COVID-19 violation. While it is unlikely that the officer knew that her grandmother is Jamaican we raise this case as, during the investigation into him, the police uncovered his membership of a WhatsApp group which shared racist and misogynist posts with other serving police officers. 'The group allegedly took aim at the likes of Meghan Markle, Labour MP Dianne Abbott and the late George Floyd.'¹⁶

In **March 2018** an investigation had been launched by the Independent Office for Police Conduct on posts on WhatsApp and Facebook groups. 'A number of racist messages including references to African children, Somali people and Auschwitz that are too offensive to publish were also uncovered.'¹⁷ Fourteen officers serving out of a number of police stations were investigated resulting in resignation, dismissal or 'internal measures to improve their performance'. However, '(nine) are still serving with the force, while another is working as a contractor in a staff role.'

⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-60757031>

¹⁰ <https://chscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Child-Q-PUBLISHED-14-March-22.pdf>

¹¹ <https://metro.co.uk/2022/03/16/child-q-how-adultification-means-black-children-are-assumed-guilty-16285230>

¹² <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/three-quarters-of-all-children-strip-searched-by-met-come-from-ethnically-divers>

¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/apr/11/teachers-say-they-no-longer-want-police-based-in-schools-after-child-q-outrage>

¹⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-59474472>

¹⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-58746108>

¹⁶ https://metro.co.uk/2022/04/09/new-whatsapp-messages-revealed-from-killer-wayne-couzens-unit-16435594/?ico=amp_tag-post-strip_item_3_news

¹⁷ <https://metro.co.uk/2022/02/01/met-police-officers-shared-messages-like-i-would-happily-rape-you-16027064>

It is part of a wider problem where 'only 53 staff out of 999 in total have left their jobs – with 75%, including some senior staff, escaping with disciplinary action.'¹⁸ Thirteen Metropolitan police officers were investigated in August 2021 after WhatsApp group messages about the Afrikan disabled son of a celebrity came to light.¹⁹ Another group of officers 'on the same team at Bexleyheath police station in south London, are accused of mocking Black suspects, sending racist and sexist jokes, and bullying a female colleague.'²⁰

In April 2019 **Neomi Bennett** was told she was going to be searched because her car windows were 'illegally tinted'.²¹ She told the male officers that she was scared and asked for a female officer but was arrested and kept in a cell for 18 hours. She was suspended from work and had to fight to get a conviction for obstructing a police officer overturned. Her windows were tinted within the legal limits.

In 2020 thirteen year old '**Huugo Boateng** was taking part in a charity bike ride with his father along the River Lea in north London when he says he was grabbed from his bike by a plainclothes police officer, threatened with a stun gun and fell face first into thorny bushes.'²²

In June 2020 '**Millard Scott**, 62, fell down some stairs and lost consciousness after being shot with a Taser during a raid by five officers on his home in Tottenham, north London. Police were looking for someone else connected to the address and part of the incident was captured on a short video that was put out by Scott's son, the artist Wretch 32.'

Olympic sprinters **Bianca Williams and Ricardo dos Santos** were stopped and searched in July 2020 with their 3 month old child in their car.²³ The incident received wide public attention because a video of the incident was posted by their trainer, former Olympic medal winner Linford Christie.²⁴

Sasha Johnson, a uk Black Lives Matter activist, was shot in the head in May 2021. Her image was found on a mocked-up T-shirt on yet another WhatsApp group believed to include serving police officers. The image 'was shared among the public servants depicting a bullet hole in her head with the words "black lives splatter".'²⁵

The uk government has still not submitted its report to the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) due April 2020. In March 2021 they published their Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report which has been widely criticised, including by UN race experts²⁶, so we will not dwell on that other than to say that '(ethnic) minority people, and specifically Black people, are disproportionately victims of violent crime and homicide'²⁷ but still does not stop them from being racially profiled.

¹⁸ <https://metro.co.uk/2021/10/04/nearly-1000-cops-investigated-for-offensive-social-media-content-since-2015-15359711>

¹⁹ <https://metro.co.uk/2021/08/09/five-more-officers-investigated-for-sharing-jokes-about-harvey-price-15060477>

²⁰ <https://metro.co.uk/2021/07/29/met-officers-investigated-over-whatsapp-group-after-mocking-harvey-price-15006723>

²¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/18/nurse-claims-met-police-wrongfully-arrested-her-because-she-black-neomi-bennett>

²² <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/28/black-teenager-on-family-cycle-ride-injured-during-aggressive-police-arrest>

²³ <https://metro.co.uk/2021/07/02/met-officers-face-misconduct-hearing-after-bianca-williams-incident-14861753>

²⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-57679756>

²⁵ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/met-police-responds-as-sasha-johnson-s-shooting-mocked-in-whatsapp-group-b2055433.html>

²⁶ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/race-report-un-boris-johnson-commission-b1833671.html>

²⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities/crime-and-policing>

'The increased number of stop and searches in the year ending March 2021 was driven by an increase in searches of White people individuals (up by 73,146 (26%) from 280,952 to 354,098). Based on self-defined ethnicity, **individuals from a Black or Black British background were searched at a rate 7.0 times higher than that of those from a White ethnic group** (compared with 8.8 times in the previous year), across England and Wales.'²⁸ Yet 'persons who identified as Black (or Black British) were arrested at a rate over 3 times higher than those who identified themselves as White'. However, the data does not show if the arrest was for the same reason the person was stopped and searched so the disparity could be even greater.

There are 45 police forces serving the United Kingdom. (British Armed Forces have their own police forces but we have not looked at these.) Each force will have some form of public engagement and scrutiny such as Independent Advisory Groups²⁹ but most of the people sitting on these bodies have been invited to join the group by the police. Reports show that many lack diversity and we are not aware of any specific groups looking at issues for Afrikan people.³⁰

While police officers meet and share good practice there is no mechanism for community scrutiny bodies to meet. This means that communities lack information on projects in one area which might benefit their own. There is no information on Police and Crime Commissioners funding Afrikan community safety initiatives, for instance. This leaves a potential gap in identifying and addressing issues for Afrikan people which should be addressed as a priority by supporting Afrikan people to network on policing issues. Those who feel it, know it.

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-stop-and-search-and-arrests-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2021/police-powers-and-procedures-stop-and-search-and-arrests-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2021>

²⁹ <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/hate-crime/community-engagement-and-tension>

³⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/13/police-panels-set-up-to-scrutinise-stop-and-search-lack-diversity>