

No Shoot to Kill, Justice for Jean Charles de Menezes

We send our heartfelt condolences to the family of Jean Charles de Menezes, in particular to his mother, Maria Ambrosia de Menezes in Brazil, who said "I'm begging that the police be punished. It's not fair to kill an innocent worker. I told him to take care... but he laughed. There's no violence in England. No one goes around carrying guns. Not even the police." (*Guardian* 25 July 2005). On the walls of their house is painted: "*England is now the Terror. Jean Charles has been a model of decency from birth.*" Justice will only be achieved when the police who shot him and those who ordered his execution are prosecuted for murder.

As parents and carers fighting for justice for ourselves and our communities for many years, including African women seeking asylum from war, military rape and other persecution, we are determined to stop more of our loved ones being murdered by shoot-to-kill. We know that our young people of colour are the first to be targeted, that shoot-to-kill is a licence for racist murder. Irish people are comparing this shooting and the police treatment of Muslims with the shoot-to-kill policy in the north of Ireland and the way Irish people in England were rounded up, tortured and imprisoned for years, for crimes they had not committed.

The UK government, backed by an increasingly embedded media (it hasn't even complained when journalists were murdered by US troops in Iraq), is promoting a witch-hunt against Muslims with murderous results. Kamal Raza Butt, a Pakistani man, was recently beaten to death by racists. Muslim women in North London are "living in fear after being spat at, verbally abused and having their headscarves removed in the street" (*Camden New Journal*, 21 July 2005).

The bombs are terrifying, whoever is responsible. But we are not fooled by the government's use of our pain and fear to silence public protest at their bloody Iraq war and occupation. We refuse their proposed extension of detention without trial, ending the right to protest within 1 km of Parliament, widespread police raids and stop-and-search, especially in Asian and Muslim working class communities, and shoot-to-kill, whoever the victim is.

As Alex Pereira, Jean Charles's cousin, said: "We must make the police pay in many ways. If not they will kill many people . . . They killed my cousin, they could kill anyone."

It is terrifying that we will now be policed according to the standards of the Israeli government, which has legalised assassination and torture, and has murdered thousands of Palestinians, including infants and toddlers. A tube driver had a gun held to his head by the same group of police who shot Jean Charles. Then police tell us they must have shoot-to-kill to protect us. It did not protect Jean Charles. We refuse their deadly "protection". Would the price have been right if the victim had been Blair's son?

No Shoot to Kill, Justice for Jean Charles!

Global Women's Strike & Payday men's network

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