

Botched police raid:

'My 18 months of hell after race charge'



Maria Njie celebrates with friends after being cleared by the court

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A DISABLED mother has hit out at police after they charged her with racially assaulting an officer during a raid on her home.

Maria Njie, a black woman from the Gambia, had told a senior officer to "get your monkeys out of my house" after a dawn drugs bust in Kentish Town in July 2012. The 50-year-old, who claimed her family had been unfairly targeted, was arrested in her home but found not guilty of "racially aggravated assault" at Blackfriars Crown Court last week.

Judge Stephen Solley instructed the jury mid-trial that there was "no case to answer", court officials confirmed to the New Journal.

Ms Njie said the arrest "has caused me 18 months of hell". She added that she should not have been accused of racism towards a black police officer as "I am black myself".

Seventeen officers raided her home in Leverton Street on July 2012 acting on intelligence that her son was in possession of class A drugs.

No drugs were found but during the commotion Ms Njie said she was handcuffed.

She said: "I have never been in handcuffs in my life. I have never had a caution or any reason to be cautioned."

Supporters of Ms Njie celebrated at Crossroads Women's Centre last week, describing her as "petite, fragile and in ill health" and adding that the family had been "traumatised" by their treatment.

Ms Njie is the cousin of Kebba Jobe, who died after a police drugs search at Camden Lock 10 years ago next May. Ms Njie's sister Nelissa said: "We want our children to end up as productive members of society, not scared to trust in the system they want to be supporting."

The Black Women's Rape Action Project and Global Women's Strike groups, both based in Camden, had urged the Crown Prosecution Service to drop the case.

A spokeswoman for Legal Action for Women, which supported Ms Njie's case, said: "These raids must stop, and the family must be fully compensated for what they have suffered."

A CPS spokesperson said that under regulations they only considered the victim when deciding whether to bring a racial abuse prosecution, thereby discounting whether Ms Njie was black.

"We reviewed all the evidence in this case in accordance with the code for crown prosecutors and concluded that there was sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction on both counts of racially aggravated assault and obstructing a police officer.

"The judge decided that the defendant had no case to answer and ordered the jury to acquit. We respect his decision.

"We always strive to bring the strongest cases possible to court."