

PRESS RELEASE JULY 25 2005

INQUEST STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF JEAN CHARLES DE MENEZES - INNOCENT MAN SHOT DEAD BY POLICE ON LONDON TUBE TRAIN

INQUEST shares the concerns of Mr Jean Charles de Menezes family that there must be a thorough and transparent investigation into the circumstances that led to his tragic death.

Helen Shaw, Co-Director said:

“We feel the utmost sorrow and anger about the unnecessary death of Jean Charles de Menezes. Serious questions need to be answered about the intelligence and operational processes that ultimately led to his death. The investigation that follows must comply with minimum human rights standards as set out in leading case law. The courts have set out five essential requirements of the investigatory obligation under the Human Rights Act: independence, effectiveness, promptness and reasonable expedition, public scrutiny and accessibility to the family of the deceased. The lack of an investigation which embodies the requisite qualities will and of itself constitute a violation of Article 2 – the Right to Life.

Deaths in custody have been a source of tremendous pain and anger amongst Londoners. The relationship between the Metropolitan Police and the community they serve has frequently been under severe strain. Public confidence in the police – so essential if they are to carry out the job that we need them to do – must not be undermined by any suggestion that the rule of law should not apply.”

Notes to Editors

INQUEST is the only non-governmental organisation in England and Wales that works directly with the families of those who die in custody or after contact with the police. It provides an independent free legal and advice service to bereaved people on inquest procedures and their rights in the coroner’s courts. INQUEST has worked directly with many families whose relatives have been shot dead by the police and has raised concerns about the issues raised with MPs, government ministers and international human rights organisations. We have major concerns about the number of fatal shootings by the police (37 since 1990) and procedures for holding the police to account which serve neither the public interest nor the families of the deceased. A disturbing number of these deaths could and should have been avoided.