

## PRESS RELEASE

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### INQUEST TO OPEN INTO RESTRAINT-RELATED DEATH OF BLACK PRISONER GODFREY MOYO AT HMP BELMARSH

10.00am Monday 22 June 2009

Sitting before HM Deputy Coroner for London (Inner South), Andrew Walker  
HM Coroner's Court, Tennis Street, London SE1 1YD

The inquest into the death of 25 year old Godfrey Moyo whilst on remand at HMP Belmarsh opens on 22 June 2009 and is expected to last for ten days.

In the early hours of 3 January 2005 Godfrey, who had a history of epilepsy, suffered a series of violent and exhausting seizures. After a lengthy period of restraint by prison officers he was carried to the healthcare unit. He was placed in the Intensive Care Suite (ICS), which was a cell which has since been decommissioned on safety grounds, and left there unsupervised. No observations of Godfrey were recorded by any officer or member of the healthcare team during the period he remained in the ICS. Some time later one of the nurses and several officers re-entered the ICS, where it was discovered that Godfrey was not breathing. He was pronounced dead at Queen Elizabeth Hospital later that morning.

The family has waited more than four years for the inquest and hope it will examine, among other things:

- the overall quality of healthcare at HMP Belmarsh;
- whether the level of force used and the duration of the restraint were justified;
- the appropriateness of the mode of carrying Godfrey to the ICS from his cell;
- the position in which Godfrey was placed in the ICS;
- whether Godfrey should have been sent to an outside hospital;
- whether the observations conducted by healthcare and discipline staff were adequate.

Deborah Coles, Co-director of INQUEST said:

*The circumstances surrounding Mr Moyo's death are extremely troubling. This case raises serious concerns about the prolonged restraint of a young black man that must be subjected to the most robust scrutiny.*

Lomaculo Moyo, Godfrey's sister, commented:

*I have been really disappointed and frustrated by the long delay in waiting for my brother's inquest. All I want now is justice for Godfrey.*

# Inquest

Godfrey Moyo's family is represented by INQUEST Lawyers Group members barrister Leslie Thomas of Garden Court Chambers instructed by Daniel Machover of Hickman and Rose Solicitors.

## Notes to editors:

INQUEST has monitored a disproportionate number of deaths following restraint involving people from black and minority ethnic communities This is the first restraint-related death in prison since the deaths of three black men in prison in 1995: Dennis Stevens in Dartmoor prison on 11th October 1995; Kenneth Severin in HMP Belmarsh on 16 November 1995; and Alton Manning in HMP Blakenhurst on 8 December 1995. See [www.inquest.org.uk](http://www.inquest.org.uk) for more information.

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.

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](#)

Further Information	<a href="http://www.inquest.org.uk">www.inquest.org.uk</a>
Deborah Coles, Co director, INQUEST	office: 020 7263 1111
Catherine Hayes, INQUEST Caseworker	office: 0207 263 1111
Daniel Machover, Hickman and Rose Solicitors	office 020 7700 2211