



Home Office

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP
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Caroline Lucas MP
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18 March 2024

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your email of 27 February to the Home Secretary about Early Day Motion (EDM) 349 concerning the case of Mr Jay Abatan. I am replying as the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire.

My sympathies lie with Mr Abatan's family and friends in their continued search for justice, and I recognise the considerable effect this will have had on them in the 25 years since his death.

As you will appreciate, police forces are independent of government and decisions concerning investigations are operational ones for them to make. I understand that the investigation remains open but is not under active investigation and, as is the norm in such instances, the force will consider any new information. As a result, information about the case should still be reported to Sussex Police online via the link below: <https://www.sussex.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/cor/tell-us-about-existing-case-report/> or call 101 quoting Operation Dorchester. Alternatively, you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or report it online at: www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

I am also aware that the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) recently wrote to you in response to your request in EDM 349 that it independently investigate Sussex Police's handling of its investigation into Mr Abatan's death. In that letter the IOPC set out the position concerning external scrutiny the case has received and that, after engagement with Sussex Police to consider any further complaints or conduct matters, the IOPC currently has no matters before it to consider. That letter was also copied to the then signatories to your EDM.

Policing has come a long way since the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, a heinous crime that shocked this country to its core. Though policing has made progress since publication of the Macpherson report in 1999, including how police forces deal with hate crime, better work with communities and recruitment of a more diverse workforce, there is much more to do.

I expect police leaders across England and Wales to take strong action on issues of racism in the police. The Home Secretary is providing strong national strategic direction over the law enforcement system through the National Policing Board and its sub-boards,

which he uses to hold the system to account against his strategic priorities. This includes police leadership, trust and confidence, police integrity and the policing sector's progress on implementing higher standards – such as on police vetting which we discussed at meetings on 8 March and 21 June 2023. Minutes of those meetings can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/national-policing-board>.

I hope this clarifies the Government's position on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Philp', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP