

# Boris Johnson attacked by MPs as Met police scandals mount up

London mayor is accused of failing to show leadership as public lose trust in Scotland Yard



Johnson will be urged to hold senior officers to account. Photograph: Dan Kitwood/Getty Images

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Boris Johnson, the man in charge of the Metropolitan Police's priorities, will be attacked this week by MPs for displaying a failure in leadership in relation to the scandals swamping Scotland Yard.

Appearing before the Home Affairs Select Committee on Tuesday, he will be urged to begin holding senior officers to account on issues of police corruption and malfeasance in an attempt to shore up public trust.

Keith Vaz, chair of the committee investigating policing and London, said: "We have very active police and crime commissioners in other parts of the country and this is core work for the mayor of London. I would anticipate that maybe he would take a much more active leadership role in these issues. He can be much more hands-on when these issues come up."

The mayor's appearance before the committee will be followed by that of Doreen Lawrence, the **mother of murdered teenager Stephen**, who is expected to demand a full public inquiry into claims that **undercover officers had hunted for information to smear her family** after her son's murder. Her call follows a series of damaging incidents involving the police including the corruption of peaceful protests, the killing of newspaper vendor **Ian Tomlinson** at the 2009 G20 protests, stealing the **identities of dead children** for undercover officers, mass use of **false charges during the miners' strike** and **systemic falsification of evidence following the Hillsborough disaster**.

Friday brought more lurid headlines after a public inquiry found a police marksman had **no lawful justification for shooting dead Azelle Rodney**, 24, in London eight years ago.

Campaigners say the rollcall of incidents has fostered a perception that the public can no longer trust the police and that "a few rotten apples" was in effect an orchard. Harriet Wistrich, of London law firm Birnberg Peirce, who is representing **eight women who had sexual relations with undercover police officers**, said the notion that Scotland Yard operated in a "counter-democratic" manner was becoming more apparent.

"They are doing all sorts of things well beyond what is expected of a police force and against the idea of an open society," some of which is deeply wrong and suggests more of a police state," she said.

Deborah Coles co-director of **Inquest**, which investigates controversial deaths following police contact, said confidence in the Met was declining:

"Our work on contentious deaths and their investigation has shown a systemic lack of accountability, transparency and institutional responsibility for abuse and misuse of police powers. The case for a judicial public inquiry into all of these revelations of police malpractice is now overwhelming."

The claim that the allegations of a campaign to discredit the Lawrence family are, say some, merely part of a policy where even the dead are discredited by the police to deflect attention from their shortcomings.

Asad Rehman, who campaigned for justice over the shooting of [Jean Charles de Menezes](#) in 2005, alleged that Scotland Yard tried to discredit the Brazilian electrician killed by police in Stockwell tube station, to cover up their mistakes

"There were false drug claims, rape claims," he said. Rehman also claimed that, as with the Lawrence allegations, elements within the Met orchestrated a campaign to smear the characters of campaigners.

"The *Sun* did a piece saying that I was a Marxist agitator linked to Black Bloc. People on friendly newspapers told us that came from the Met. The Met was dropping things into the public domain and people were asking where is this coming from?" Former Met officer Chris Hobbs describes a regime so single-minded in the protection of its reputation that anyone rocking the boat is given rough treatment. Hobbs, who spent 23 years in the Met, including Special Branch, before leaving in 2011, said: "It's run like a dictatorship and if you dare challenge the system then you've had it. If you take on the Met as a whistleblower you'll never win. I was forcibly retired after making my concerns known."

He says that it's not just the public who have lost the trust of the Met but officers themselves: "The hierarchy haven't the trust of the troops on the ground."

John Tully, chair of the [Metropolitan police](#) federation, said that despite the negative coverage, trust in the police was actually increasing: "It's considerably higher than in recent years. Victims of crime [are more satisfied with the police] than a few years ago, so we must be doing something right. The majority of officers are doing their job in a successful way."

He also urged caution about interpreting incidents as indicative of normal operating procedure: "They are pretty bad press but taken in isolation, the broader picture is that there are 30,000 federation members working their socks off, but there is always the odd one that upsets the apple cart."

However, Vaz referred to a recent survey showing that 38% of black and ethnic minority people still felt that the Met was institutionally racist following the allegations that officers had spied on the Lawrence family.

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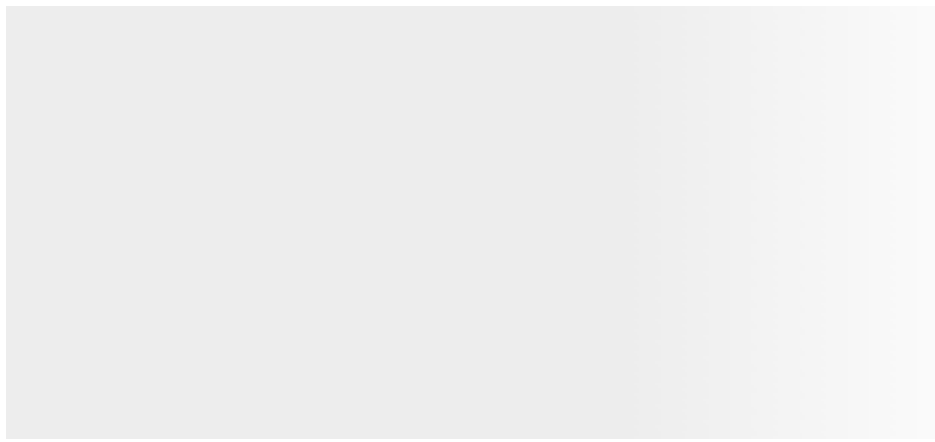
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