

Doreen Lawrence to meet Met chief over claims of police smear campaign

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe says he will try to answer questions from lawyers for Stephen Lawrence's mother



📷 The Met police commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, who said it was not for him to call for a public inquiry on the Stephen Lawrence claims. Photograph: Rebecca Naden/PA

Sandra Laville, *crime correspondent*

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Doreen Lawrence is to meet the [Metropolitan police](#) commissioner on Friday over allegations by a former undercover officer that her family was targeted in a smear campaign.

Her lawyers have asked 13 questions of the Metropolitan police following allegations made by Peter Francis, a former undercover officer, in the Guardian that he was [asked to find dirt on the family](#) after the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993.

Speaking at City Hall in London on Thursday morning, Sir [Bernard Hogan-Howe](#) said he would try to answer some of the questions that Lawrence's lawyer Imran Khan had put forward, but insisted it was not for him to call for a public inquiry.

He said: "We can see if we can answer those questions. We can tell her what we're doing.

"At the end of the day all I have to offer is a police inquiry. Whether or not the government or parliament is persuaded by that, I can't really say any more than I have said already."

He said it was within the powers of the Independent [Police](#) Complaints Commission to take over the Operation Herne inquiry being led by the chief constable of Derbyshire, Mick Creedon.

Lawrence [met Theresa May at the Home Office](#) on Thursday morning to urge her to hold a full investigation in public.

May said earlier this week that the claims could be examined by two existing inquiries: Operation Herne, the police investigation into the activities of undercover officers, and another led by Mark Ellison QC into allegations of corruption in the original investigation into the murder.

Lawrence said after the meeting: "She said all options are open and she explained about the different reviews that are going on at the moment and how it could be expanded.

"I made my point quite clear - for the past 20 years we as a family have been talking about corruption and we have undercover officers trying to smear our family. I want answers. I want to know who was the senior officer who signed that off."

Hogan-Howe told members of the police and crime committee in [London](#) that he also hoped to meet the women who had given birth to children as a result of relationships with undercover officers in the past.

He said: "My heart is for trying to meet these women at some point ... there is not a large group of them."

He revealed that he had asked the head of serious crime, the assistant commissioner Mark Rowley, to carry out a review of all ongoing undercover operations within the Metropolitan police and the national domestic extremism unit - now within the control of his force - as a result of the latest allegations.

It is the second review of ongoing undercover operations to be carried out since he took over as commissioner.

Allegations that Duwayne Brooks, who was with Stephen Lawrence when he was murdered, [had been bugged](#) during meetings with his lawyer and police officers around 1999-2000 were also being examined by Creedon, whose inquiry involves a review and investigation of the use of undercover officers by the Met police's former Special Demonstration Squad. The SDS was set up in 1968 and dissolved in 2008.

The commissioner said he had asked Creedon to prioritise the Lawrence claims. He said: "What they are looking at is 40 years of material. I have

already asked the chief constable of Derbyshire to prioritise the particular allegations about the targeting of the Lawrence family."

Referring to the allegations that Brooks was bugged, Hogan-Howe said: "In terms of how many times it happened we're not sure, because we can only get the original allegation and we've got a relatively brief - I won't say vague - letter making the allegation about one incident.

"It may be that Duwayne Brooks or his representatives might say: 'We don't know how many times it happened - that's what we would like you to find out.' And that's what the investigation will look at."

The deputy assistant commissioner Craig Mackey told the committee: "The questions everyone wants answers to are: who made the decisions? Who authorised the surveillance? On what basis were things authorised? That's the work that we're doing."

Separately, a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) into the use of undercover officers in long-running operations within protest movements, which was published on Thursday, revealed that recommendations made in 2012 had not all been implemented.

Tom Winsor, chief inspector of constabulary, said he shared the concerns of the prime minister and home secretary over the use of undercover police officers in the wake of allegations related to the Lawrence family.

Winsor said the HMIC would carry out a full review of undercover activities across all 43 forces. He said he was concerned to find that recommendations made in a 2012 report on the use of undercover policing within domestic extremist groups, such as far-right activists and animal rights protesters, had not been implemented.

He said: "This week's coverage concerning the deployment of undercover police officers - and in particular, the serious allegations in relation to members of the Lawrence family and Duwayne Brooks - has rightly resulted in much debate about how the tactic has been and should be used."

In its 2012 report, HMIC called for tighter controls after it found the undercover officer Mark Kennedy, who spent seven years posing as a long-haired drop-out climber, Mark "Flash" Stone, ignored orders, carried on working after being arrested and believed he was best placed to make decisions about his deployment.

His actions led to the collapse of a case against six protesters accused of planning to invade the second largest power station in the UK.

Kennedy, who admitted he had sexual relationships with at least two women during the operation, later [described the world of undercover policing as "grey and murky"](#).

In its review of progress made since that report was published, HMIC said some significant work had taken place but it was concerned that



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