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Further Stephen Lawrence inquiry possible, says David Cameron

Prime minister says nothing is off the table after claims that police secretly tried to undermine family of murdered teenager



📷 Doreen Lawrence, mother of Stephen Lawrence, with David Cameron at a memorial service earlier this year. Photograph: Facundo Arrizabalaga/EPA

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David Cameron said he remained open to further inquiries into claims that police secretly tried to undermine the family of murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence, but would at present resist [calls for a public inquiry](#).

The prime minister told the House of Commons that "nothing is off the table" as the Lawrence family prepared for a [meeting with the home secretary, Theresa May](#), to ask for an inquiry into claims police secretly hunted for information to smear their campaign for justice.

His response to the claims, [first revealed in the Guardian](#), will disappoint supporters of the Lawrence family who hoped he would announce an immediate public and independent inquiry.

Instead, Cameron said May met Mark Ellison QC, who is leading a review of alleged police corruption in the original Lawrence murder investigation, to make sure his inquiry covered allegations that Scotland Yard [secretly bugged meetings](#) they held with Lawrence's friend and murder witness Duwayne Brooks and his lawyer.

At the same time, ministers have said, the spying allegations would also be looked at by an existing internal [Metropolitan police](#) review, Operation Herne, led by the chief constable of Derbyshire, Mick Creedon.

Responding to a question from David Winnick, the Labour MP for Walsall North, Cameron said: "The Lawrence family have suffered appallingly ... They lost their son, there was the failure to investigate properly for year after year, and now they hear these allegations that the police were trying to undermine them rather than help them.

"The home secretary set out in the house on Monday these two inquiries, independent inquiries, already under way. She's met again with Mark Ellison QC this morning to make sure his inquiry will cover the allegations that were made overnight about the bugging by the police of a friend of [Stephen Lawrence](#).

"But I have to say nothing is off the table. If more needs to be done, if further investigations or inquiries need to be held, they will be held. This is not an acceptable situation."

Winnick said: "Is the prime minister aware how shocking it was that the police apparently spent more time investigating the parents and friends of Stephen Lawrence than the racist murder itself, which took place in 1993?"

"Is the home secretary, when she meets Mrs Lawrence, is she going to apologise for what occurred and is it really right for the police to investigate itself?"

Lawrence was 18 when he was killed in a racist attack in Eltham, south [London](#), in 1993.

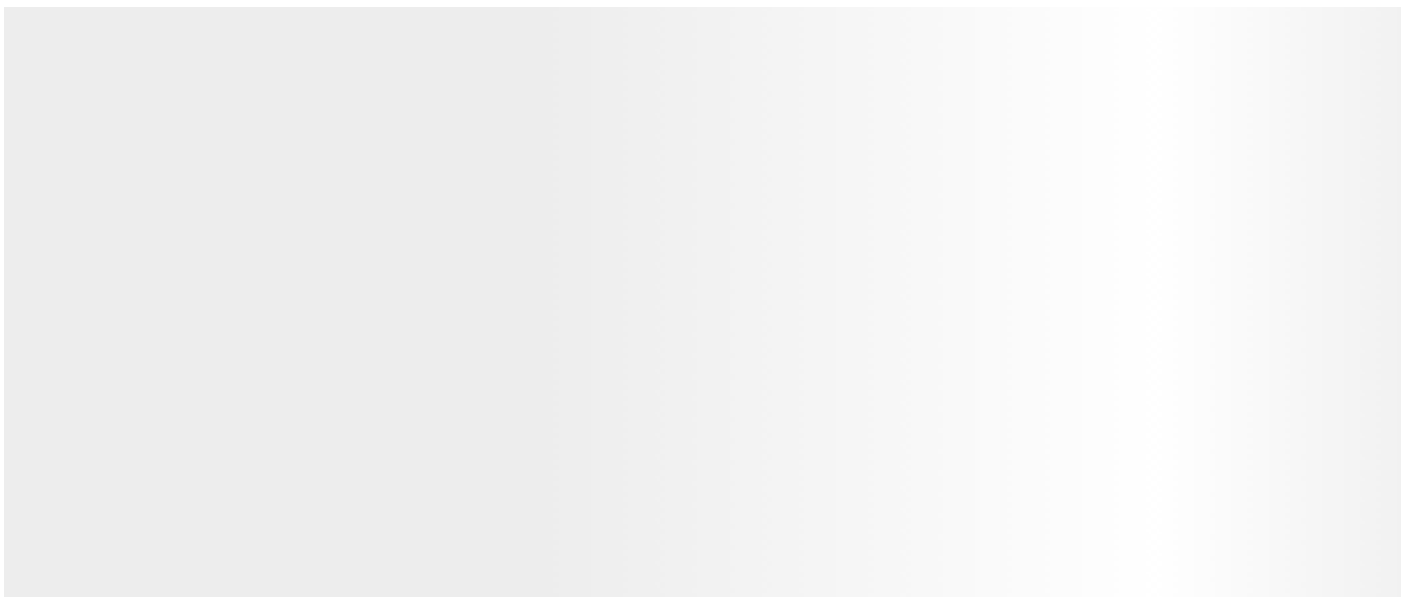
The failure of police to properly investigate the murder sparked the Macpherson Inquiry, which concluded that the Metropolitan police was institutionally racist.

Ellison was lead barrister in the successful 2012 prosecutions of Gary Dobson and David Norris for the murder.

Coalition ministers wish to placate the Lawrences, aware that their treatment is still politically important 20 years after Stephen's murder. Last year, Doreen Lawrence reacted angrily to the failure of the prime minister and Nick Clegg to reply to letters she had sent them. She said the government seemed indifferent to the effect of cuts on poor communities.

May will also have noted the re-involvement in the case of the former Labour home secretary Jack Straw.

On Tuesday Straw confirmed that he would personally refer Francis's allegations relating to the Lawrences for investigation by the Independent **Police** Complaints Commission. He said that even he, as home secretary, was unaware of the elite undercover unit that allegedly deployed Francis to smear the Lawrences.



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