**Justice 4 Edson Family Campaign**

**Statement**

Edson Da Costa was a loving father, son, cousin and trusted friend. He had a good heart and a captivating, vibrant personality. He was a young man of 25 with his future ahead of him, and a young son who thought the world of him. His death has left tremendous grief and a massive void in the lives of his family and friends.

On Thursday 15 June, non-uniformed officers stopped the car Edson was travelling in. Following the stop, Edson was detained and according to witnesses, CS gas was used at very close range and a choke-hold applied. Edson lost consciousness and was taken to hospital and placed on life support. The life support was terminated six days later on 21 June.

***The Edson family campaign is committed to fighting for Justice 4 Edson Da Costa. We are calling for:***

* **Justice for Edson Da Costa**: We are calling on full transparency from the Metropolitan Police and full and open collaboration with the IPCC inquiry into all the circumstances and police actions surrounding Edson’s death.
* **Police accountability**: We are calling for the suspension of the police officers involved in the circumstances that led to Edson’s death, pending the outcome of investigations. Such a process is common practice throughout public services.

We demand that Police officers face prosecution for any criminal or negligent action that led to Edson’s death

**The death toll of black and ethnic minority people while in police custody or in contact with the police is unacceptable and must end.**

Within 5 weeks of Edson’s death, Rashan Charles, 20, died while being restrained by police in Hackney and Darren Cumberbatch died in hospital, after being detained by Warwickshire police.

Deaths in police custody are disproportionately from black and ethnic minority backgrounds, yet little or no effective action has been taken to redress this continuing tragic loss of life. We believe that dangerous methods of restraint, lead all too frequently to injury and death. This must end.

* **Public inquiry**: We call for a public inquiry into the disproportionate number of black and ethnic minority deaths in police custody and the failure to gain any successful prosecution against a police officer, even in those cases where inquest juries have returned verdicts of unlawful killing.
* **Methods of restraint**: The use of choke-holds is potentially fatal and has led to numerous deaths in custody. Police guidance on the use of these methods of restraint are neither observed nor monitored. We call for the immediate end of the use of “choke-holds” and similar methods as a means of “positional restraint” liable to cause a cessation of breathing.
* **Use of CS Gas**: Since the issuing of personal CS Gas spray canisters to police in 1996 there have been a number of deaths involving the use of CS Gas. We call for an urgent review of the use of CS Gas by police officers.
* **The IPCC:** Public confidence in the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) remains low among young people and in particular people from BME communities. We therefore call for an independent review of the IPCC and of processes for investigating complaints; this review should involve, and take place in consultation with the families of those that have died in police custody.
* **The Press**: We call for an end to the systematic demonisation and defamation of those who die in police custody by the press.