

Prime Minister Boris Johnson
10 Downing Street
SW1A 2AA

Sunday 10th May 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

We are a broad coalition of individuals united on this vitally important issue. We write to you with a solemn petition for an independent public inquiry into the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the UK's BAME communities.

We welcome the NHS' Race Observatory proposal and Professor Dr Kevin Fenton's appointment to lead a scientific review of COVID-19 deaths pertaining to BAME frontline staff, particularly those in the NHS, and the broader population in the UK.

While this data-led review is important from a public health perspective, an independent public inquiry would have a broader scope. It would provide a comprehensive exploration of all possible contributing factors that could explain the outsized effect Covid-19 has on BAME communities, killing up to four times as many as white people in some groups. It is doubtful that the review's current scope can provide the critical answers needed, it should examine the following points:

- 1. The cultural and systemic treatment of BAME staff by their employers as part of their duty of care and in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.**
- 2. The level of exposure to COVID-19 by BAME staff in the NHS, Care Sector and all key workers across public and private sectors.**
- 3. The level of preparedness and emergency planning within central and local government in response to how they factored the needs and requirements of BAME communities in line with Public Sector Equalities Duty.**
- 4. Examination of the level of funding and investment on public health, physical and social infrastructure in local authority areas where there is a significant BAME population and where there is a disproportionate death rate linked to COVID-19.**
- 5. The impact of the government's COVID-19 emergency powers and social distancing policy on BAME communities.**

Only an independent public inquiry will provide the answers we need. Such an inquiry is essential for all, especially for those who have lost loved ones as a result of the pandemic.

COVID-19 is clearly now one of the biggest issues in post-war history, directing a spotlight on race and health inequalities. Over the last forty years, there has been a precedent of similar inquiries such as: the Scarman Report on the Brixton Riots, the MacPherson Report on the murder of Stephen Lawrence, The Victoria Climbié inquiry on safeguarding, the Zahid Mubarek inquiry and the recent Windrush Scandal Lessons Learned Review.

By instigating such an inquiry, the government will provide an opportunity for a range of stakeholders to submit evidence through a transparent process. This would help to restore public confidence amongst the UK's BAME communities. An inquiry will provide key findings and offer clear recommendations for systemic or transformational change around the role of the public sector and race equality in Britain.

As signatories, we ask you to support our call for an independent public inquiry to address the points we raise in this letter.

Afua Adom	Broadcaster & Journalist
Afua Hirsch	Writer & Broadcaster
Akram Khan	Dancer & Choreographer
Andrew Fairbairn	CEO, Sponsors for Educational Opportunity
Andy Gregg	CEO, Race on the Agenda
Asma Khan	Chef
Ayesha Hazarika MBE	Commentator & Comedian
Baroness Doreen Lawrence OBE	Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon
Bishop Claion Grandison	New Testament Church of God
Bonnie Greer OBE	Writer & Broadcaster
Caroline Criado Perez	Author
Clenton Farquharson MBE	Think Local, Act Personal
Colenzo Jarrett-Thorpe	Unite the Union - National Official for Health & Social Care
David Weaver	Coalition of Race Equality Organisations
Deborah Coles	Executive Director, INQUEST
Deeba Syed	Sexual Harassment Lawyer
Dominic Scott	Managing Director, Alexander Hall
Dr Barbara Lipietz	Associate Professor, Co-Chair UCL Sustainable Cities
Dr David Muir	Snr Lecturer Public Theology, Roehampton Uni
Dr Elizabeth Henry	National Adviser, Race & Ethnicity, Archbishops' Council, C of E
Dr Kailash Chand GP	Vice President, BMA
Dr Martin Edobor GP	General Practitioner
Dr Onkar Sahota GP	General Practitioner
Dr Patrick Roach	General Secretary, NASWUT
Dr Rebecca Amissah, MD	NHS Doctor
Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu	Lawyer & Political & Women's Rights Activist
Dr Sonia Adesara	Accident & Emergency NHS Doctor
Elizabeth Uviebinené	Co Author Stay in Your Lines; Financial Times
Emma Obanye	Co-Founder, Mindful Team
Farooq Chaudhry OBE	International Dance Producer
Femi Oyeniran	Actor, Director
Fevzi Hussein	GMB Union Race Chair
Harun Khan	Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain
Jamie Scott	NHS Staff Nurse
Jermaine Jackman	Singer

Jonzi D	Breakin' Convention
Joy Warmington	BRAP
Kahiye Alim	Director, Council of Somali Organisations
Katrina Ffrench	Chief Executive, StopWatch UK
Kike Oniwinde	Founder BYP Network
Konnie Huq	Broadcaster
Kwame Kwei – Armah OBE	Artistic Director Young Vic
Malorie Blackman OBE	Author
Matt Henry MBE	Singer and Actor
Marion Wadibia	CEO, Naz Project
Marvin Rees	Mayor of Bristol
Mete Coban MBE	CEO and Founder My Life, My Say
Michael Afilaka	Sport Scientist & Performance Coach
Michael Hamilton	Director, The Ubele Initiative
Patricia Hamzahee FRSA	Founder, Integriti Capital
Patrick Vernon OBE	Social Commentator & Campaigner
Phil Wang	Comedian
Priscilla Nwiko	TV Presenter/Producer
Professor Anthony Reddie	Director, Oxford Centre for Religion & Culture, Oxford Uni.
Professor JS Bamrah CBE	Consultant Psychiatrist
Rehana Azam	National Secretary GMB Union
Renee Hunt	Director Group Digital Platforms, Sky
Reverend Ben Atkins	Parish of Canning Town, Saint Matthias Church
Rianna Raymond-Williams	Journalist & Founder, Shine Aloud UK
Right Reverend Christopher Chessun	Bishop of Southwark
Right Reverend Peter Hill	Bishop of Barking
Right Reverend Paul Bayes	Bishop of Liverpool
Roger McKenzie	Assistant General Secretary, Unison
Rokhsana Fiaz OBE	Mayor of Newham
Sachini Imbuldeniya	Creative Director
Saiqa Naz	Mental Health Practitioner
Saloum N'jie	Film Director
Sam Smethers	Director, Fawcett Society
Sarbjit Grainger	Director, Asian Women's Resource Centre
Sharmaine Lovegrove	Publisher
Sharon Grant OBE	Director, Bernie Grant Arts Centre
Shaun Escoffery	West End Actor and Musician

Shavanah Taj	General Secretary Wales, TUC
Sonia Winifred	Psychodynamic Psychotherapist
Suki Fuller	Founder, Miribue
Sunder Katwala	Director, British Future
Susie Symes	Chair, Museum of Immigration & Diversity
Tanita Tikaram	Musician
Taranjit Chana	GMB Union Race Secretary
The Very Reverend Rogers Govender	Dean, Manchester Cathedral
Tracey Lazard	CEO, Inclusion London
Vivienne Hayes MBE	CEO, Women's Resource Centre
Yvonne Field	Managing Director, The Ubele Initiative