

Michael Lockwood
Director General
Independent Office for Police Conduct
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By email: enquiries@policeconduct.gov.uk

25 August 2020

Dear Mr Lockwood,

We, the undersigned, write to you to express our concerns relating to the case of Dr Rashid Abbasi and his wife Dr Aliya Abbasi that has received widespread media coverage.

In a publicly released video, we observe a grieving father sitting calmly by his terminally ill daughter's bedside, having recently received news of the decision to withdraw life supporting treatment. We then witness an alarmingly rapid escalating series of events with excessive use of police force and violence despite Dr Aliya Abbasi's plea for a compassionate discussion. Furthermore, Dr Rashid Abbasi can be seen to be complaining of chest pain and repeatedly asking for his medication, which he is denied access to and chastised by officers. He goes on to develop an acute cardiac event requiring a procedure the following day.

Whilst the full events are yet to be ascertained including the account from the NHS Trust and police officers, the disproportionate display of violence at the bedside of a dying child and lack of compassion are difficult to justify. This is especially concerning as we understand that no charges were filed against the grieving parents.

No doubt you are aware of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, many of whom have been working in frontline and key worker roles. This particular incident has deeply unsettled the medical and wider BAME community, creating anger about the maltreatment of grieving BAME parents of a terminally ill child.

In the current environment where a national commitment to address racial inequalities has been affirmed, we urge a full inquiry into this most unfortunate event as a matter of urgency.

This must involve a full analysis of the factors which led to the event, including any racial, religious, or cultural elements at play, with recommendations and tangible actions to prevent further incidents and hold responsible bodies and individuals to account. We must also have robust reassurances that this will never happen again.

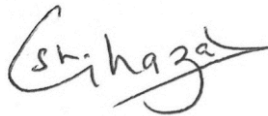
This is vital to ensure the trust of the public and healthcare staff is restored, especially during an ongoing public health emergency.

We look forward to your timely reply.

Yours sincerely,



Remy Mohamed
President, Association of Muslim Lawyers



Dr Sharif Kaf Al-Ghazal
President, British Islamic Medical Association



Dr Hina J Shahid
Chair, Muslim Doctors Association

Cc:

Winton Keenen – Chief Constable, Northumbria Police
Dame Jackie Daniel – Chief Executive, The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS
Foundation Trust
Ian Trenholm – Chief Executive - Care Quality Commission