

## **Justice Committee**

### **PE1370 – Justice for Megrahi**

#### **Submission from petitioners**

#### **Submission and update to the Justice Committee of the Scottish Parliament regarding progress on Police Scotland investigation of Justice for Megrahi allegations from 24<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014.**

For the benefit of informed consideration of Justice for Megrahi's (JFM's) petition PE1370 by the Justice Committee of the Scottish Parliament, JFM wishes to present the Justice Committee with the following.

#### **JFM's current relationship with Police Scotland**

You will recall that in a letter to the Justice Committee of the Scottish Parliament immediately prior to its last consideration of our petition (PE1370) on 24 September 2013, DCC Shearer stated that the deferment of our allegations would only be for a matter of weeks as he then understood that the point of conflict with the live [ongoing] Crown Office investigation would be resolved within such a time frame. Justice Convener Christine Grahame stated, at the session of 24<sup>th</sup> September, that she accepted that weeks were weeks and that she did not expect it to take months. We have now entered the realm of months since said session of the Justice Committee.

We can add to the above by informing the Justice Committee that on 15 January 2014, I, Robert Forrester (Sec. JFM), telephoned the police's Professional Standards Department in order to establish to whom I should submit a ninth allegation along with an addendum to allegation eight. In addition, I also enquired as to who the replacement SIO to Mr Shearer was given his retirement in early October. I spoke to a Chief Inspector and I was informed that I could submit any documentation to him and he would forward it to the designated SIO. Moreover, he said that there had been a meeting the day before to discuss who the new SIO would be but at that time he was unaware of any decision. As yet, we remain in the dark as to who the new SIO is.

In short, we appear to be no further forward from the last Justice Committee session. There seems to have been zero progress with regard to the Dumfries and Galloway Division of Police Scotland (D&G) investigation into our allegations (in particular with reference to the freezing of allegations 5, 6 and 7). As you can imagine JFM is at all times keen to avoid delays in this process. To that end, we will, this week (beginning 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014), be sending a letter of complaint on the matter to Sir Stephen House QPM, Chief Constable of Police Scotland, in an attempt to encourage his intervention in order to remedy this unacceptable logjam.

We are most disappointed in the apparently dismissive approach being adopted by D&G to our allegations and, by dint of the last consideration of PE1370, the Justice Committee itself. JFM has received no updates from D&G on the matter despite assurances that we would. Furthermore, and as mentioned above, both JFM and

the Justice Committee were informed, in September of last year, by DCC Shearer that the apparent conflict between JFM's allegations 5, 6 and 7 would be resolved in a matter of weeks. Finally, we are left in a void of not knowing who the new SIO is following DCC Shearer's retirement in early October 2013.

JFM regards this current impasse as utterly unprofessional behaviour on the part of Police Scotland, particularly given the grave nature of the issue at hand. We also believe that this conduct reflects very poorly on Police Scotland's attitude towards the Justice Committee of the Scottish Parliament.

According to the Scottish Government's own statistics there was an increase of 7.8 per cent or 1,262 officers between 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 in the strength of the Scottish police service. In this regard, it does seem incongruous that JFM should be encountering such delays and an almost total lack of communication: particularly in light of the serious criminal allegations that are being made in a case involving 270 murders.

See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2013/06/Police-numbers-at-all-time-high04062013>

We, therefore, request the intervention of the Justice Committee on the matter.

### **Media reports on a potential third appeal**

The Justice Committee's attention is drawn to media speculation of a new referral to the SCCRC by Mr. Megrahi's immediate family or relatives of some of the bereaved in the tragedy. JFM has no definitive information to add at this juncture nor does our organisation have a locus in respect of a referral.

See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-25465662>

The whole Lockerbie affair has over the years been bedevilled by rumour, gossip and speculation which has been extremely unhelpful to those, like ourselves, who seek only the truth. It has been used by individuals and groups to justify unsupportable theories and by governments and authorities like the Crown Office and police as a cover for delay and procrastination.

Our petition and the related criminal allegations stand alone as JFM initiatives and we hope that the committee will treat them as such.

Robert Forrester (Secretary, Justice for Megrahi).  
On behalf of the Committee of Justice for Megrahi.  
30 January 2014