

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

24 July 2002

JAMAICA

Dave Beckford (m)

Family of Dave and Reagon Beckford

Killed: Reagon Beckford (m)

Police have beaten and threatened Dave Beckford, the brother of Reagon Beckford, who was killed by police officers in March 2001. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Dave Beckford and that of his family.

Amnesty International believes that the police officers were trying to intimidate the family of Reagon Beckford, to prevent them from pursuing their quest for justice in relation to the death of their son. The Senior Superintendent, head of the Crime Management Unit, is due to give evidence at an inquest tomorrow in relation to the death of Reagon Beckford and six other youths killed by police on 14 March 2001 in an alleged extrajudicial execution. An autopsy report showed that Reagon Beckford was shot eight times in the neck, chest, abdomen, right thigh, right lower leg and left foot.

On 23 July at around 6pm, the Senior Superintendent and an estimated 30 other police officers, some of whom were attached to the Hundred Man Police Station, entered the home of the Beckford family in Braeton. Police officers allegedly beat Dave Beckford on the chest, face and testicles, and choked him. Police then reportedly made Dave Beckford kneel down in his bedroom, cocked a gun and put it to his head. He was interrogated and accused of having guns with which to kill the police.

The Senior Superintendent reportedly entered and said, "You know who I am?" When Dave Beckford replied that he didn't, the Senior Superintendent said, "... Is not your brother was around at that house and got killed?", referring to the killing of Reagon Beckford.

Police also ransacked the house, destroying items of furniture and removing photographs and the birth certificates of Reagon Beckford's mother, two sisters, brother and a female cousin. They requested that Dave Beckford report to the police station at 8pm on 23 July, but no reason was given for the request and Dave Beckford was not informed of any pending charges.

A human rights organization has complained on behalf of the Beckford family to the Commissioner of Police and the police control room about the incident. So far there has been no response from the authorities to indicate whether the incident is being investigated.

Dave Beckford was allegedly beaten and kicked by police officers on a previous occasion around 17 July.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has received several other reports alleging intimidation and threats against members of the families "Braeton 7"; those killed along with Reagon Beckford. On one occasion, members of the Crime Management Unit, accompanied by its head, the Senior Superintendent of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, allegedly visited family members and local residents the week after the seven youths were killed and made threats against them. Amnesty International reported these allegations to the Commissioner of Police in a meeting in April 2001. The Commissioner informed the organization that the threats would be investigated and the organization informed of the outcome of the investigations. At the present time, the organization has not received this information.

Amnesty International has received hundreds of reports of extrajudicial executions committed by members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force over the last ten years, as well as acts of torture and ill-treatment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern at reports of death threats and beating of Dave Beckford and of intimidation of Reagon Beckford's family;
- urging the Jamaican authorities to immediately take appropriate measures to guarantee the safety of the Beckford family;
- calling for an immediate, impartial and full investigation into the attack and threat on 23 July and asking for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- expressing concern at the general level of police brutality in Jamaica;
- urging the police authorities to inform Amnesty International of the outcome of the investigation into previous threats against family members of the "Braeton 7" and other Braeton residents.

APPEALS TO:

Minister for National Security
The Hon. Dr. P. Philipps
Mutual Life Building
North Tower
2 Oxford Road
PO Box 472
Kingston 5
JAMAICA
West Indies

Fax: + 1 876 906 1724

Telegrams: Minister for National Security, Kingston, JAMAICA

Salutation: Dear Minister

Commissioner of Police
Francis A. Forbes, CD, LL.B.
Office of the Commissioner
101-105 Old Hope Road
Kingston 6
JAMAICA
West Indies

Fax: + 1 876 927 7516

Telegrams: Commissioner of Police, Kingston, Jamaica

Salutation: Dear Commissioner

Minister of Justice
The Hon. A.J. Nicholson
Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
Mutual Life Building
North Tower
2 Oxford Road
PO Box 472
Kingston 5
JAMAICA
West Indies

Fax: + 1 876 906 1724

Telegrams: Minister of Justice, Kingston, JAMAICA

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Superintendent Harrison
Head
Hundred Man Police Station
1 Braeton Park Way
Braeton

Kingston
JAMAICA
West Indies.

Fax: + 1 876 949 8432

Salutation: Dear Superintendent Harrison

and to diplomatic representatives of Jamaica accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 September 2002.