

## EXTERNAL

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Amnesty International  
International Secretariat  
1 Easton Street  
London WC1X 8DJ  
United Kingdom  
Tel: (44) (171) 413 5500  
Fax: (44) (171) 956 1157

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### UNITED KINGDOM: KILLING OF DIARMUID O'NEILL

Armed police carried out a raid on a house in west London in the early morning of 23 September, resulting in the death of Diarmuid O'Neill, a 27-year old man suspected of being a member of the IRA, and the arrest of two others. Diarmuid O'Neill was apparently shot six times by two officers from Scotland Yard's tactical firearms group, SO19. Questions have already been raised concerning the circumstances of the killing. Initial statements by the police justified the death of Diarmuid O'Neill by stating that he was killed during a shootout between the police and the arrested suspects. However, subsequent reports apparently have confirmed that Diarmuid O'Neill was unarmed, that the other suspects were also unarmed and that there was no shootout.

The photographs of smeared blood on the front steps of the house would seem to indicate that Diarmuid O'Neill was dragged, seriously wounded, down the steps to the pavement, rather than being treated where he lay or removed on a stretcher. Another issue of concern to Amnesty International is the reported use of CS gas during the operation: what was the intent behind the use and what effects would the amount of CS gas used have had on Diarmuid O'Neill's behaviour or mental reasoning?

Amnesty International understands that a police investigation is being carried out by a senior officer of the Metropolitan Police Service, the same police force that was involved in the incident. This would appear to depart from past practice whereby senior officers from external police forces have been brought in to investigate serious allegations about police conduct.

Amnesty International understands that the killing took place in the context of a planned arrest operation by the security forces of people suspected of involvement in armed activities. Previous similar incidents have raised critical questions about the potential for such operations to result in allegations of extrajudicial executions. This makes it all the more important for the government to be seen to be carrying out a truly independent and impartial investigation into this serious incident. Amnesty International therefore urges the government to institute a judicial inquiry into the full circumstances of the killing. The organization is also seeking clarification from the government on the reasons for the initial misleading statements to the media and the public.