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Jamaica: Patrick Genius inquest -- A first step to end impunity?

The ruling of the Coroner's Inquest that all police involved in the death of Patrick Genius should be held criminally responsible is a first step to ensuring that his killing is investigated fully, in accordance with international standards, Amnesty International said today.

The ruling came nearly a year and a half after Patrick Genius was killed by police officers in Kingston, Jamaica on 13 December 1999. The autopsy report into his death indicated that he had sustained two gunshots to the leg and three shots to the head -- two of which were to the back of the head. An internationally renowned pathologist, who reviewed the autopsy report, concluded that the killing bore the classic hallmarks of execution; its pattern suggesting incapacitation followed by killing.

"This case, however, highlights the grave deficiencies in the investigation of police killings in Jamaica," Amnesty International said. "Although the ruling is a welcome step, the case itself was marred by delays in the police investigation and inquest, incomplete and inadequate forensic evidence, and the failure to inform Genius' relatives of the status of the investigation."

Since the release of Amnesty International's report on police killings in April 2001, the organisation has continued to receive credible reports of alleged extra-judicial killings by police, of intimidation and ill-treatment of relatives and of attempts by the police to contaminate evidence to prevent proper investigations.

"The need to ensure the end to systematic impunity for police killings is ever stronger," Amnesty International said.

Background

Eye witnesses to the killing claimed that Patrick Genius was shot with his hands up in the air after being detained by police officers travelling in an unmarked car.

For more information on police killings in Jamaica, see *JAMAICA: Killings and Violence by Police - How many more victims?*,

<http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/Index/amr380032001>.

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