

Metric 2007 11 000 9114

6 December 2007

Boris Johnson MP
Campaign Headquarters
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Centre Point Tower
103 New Oxford Street
London WC1A 1DD

In responding to your letter dated 27 November 2007, I am very, very surprised that you continue to stand by your comments that the officers involved were 'trigger happy'.

To describe them in this way is offensive to the men and women who routinely have to face some of the most dangerous situations within policing, to protect the Londoners they serve and their unarmed colleagues. Many of these armed officers have complained about your comments.

Your analysis of the operation does nothing to convey to Londoners the complexities of the threat we faced and still face.

In my letter of 23rd November, I set out some of the facts. I remind you again: In the last 12 months, the Met has been alerted to over 10,000 incidents and operations said to involve a firearm. On only three occasions have officers chosen to fire their weapons. The figures speak for themselves.

Armed officers are highly skilled and accountable. These courageous men and women volunteer: they accept that they will have to stand between armed criminals and the public in life and death situations, which demand split second decision-making.

Mr De Menezes was shot by police at Stockwell Underground Station after being mistakenly identified as a suicide bomber. His death was an absolute tragedy and the MPS has never sought to avoid accountability for it. However, the prosecution in the Health and Safety trial did not call the officers

concerned in the shooting to give their account and that will not be heard until the Inquest next year. Until that time, I would suggest that those without knowledge of what they will say should think long and hard before making comment.

Mr De Menezes died because the Met was facing an entirely unforeseen threat – that of suicide bombers on the run. In the period since July 2005, the Met has set about the development of new procedures to counter this and other threats emerging from terrorist activity in the UK.

With regard to your penultimate paragraph about “common sense policing,” I draw your attention again to the penultimate paragraph of my letter of 23 November, which I attach for ease of reference.

I have passed this correspondence to the officer in charge of CO19 Firearms Unit, Chief Superintendent Bill Tillbrook. I really do suggest that you take time to meet him and his officers. He can be contacted via email

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A copy of this goes to Len Duvall, Chair MPA.

Ian Blair
Commissioner