

Bhatt Murphy Solicitors

PRESS RELEASE

20 February 2019

Gross misconduct proceedings start against MPS officers in connection with Linah Keza murder

Linah Keza was stabbed to death on 31 July 2013 by her former partner David Gikawa. She was just 29 and her two year old daughter witnessed her mother's death. David Gikawa is now serving a life sentence for her murder, which followed years of threatening and abusive behaviour by him, including an attempted strangulation and placing a knife in her mouth whilst threatening to kill her.

In the weeks before her death, Linah had called the police on six different occasions asking for protection from David Gikawa. She explained to them that he carried a knife, that he was capable of killing someone and that she was *"so scared that she could not breathe"*. On the last such call, Linah reported that Gikawa was harassing her and had threatened to kill her friend and that she believed he had slashed her friend's tyres. Police attended but failed to circulate David Gikawa as wanted for arrest.

The next day, Gikawa phoned the police to ask them to attend when he collected his belongings from Linah's address. Intelligence checks established that he had previous for violence, that he carried a large knife and had been standing outside Linah's home harassing her. Despite this being known, Gikawa was told he could attend Linah's home without police supervision. The day after that, David Gikawa attended Linah's home and killed her.

In 2016 the IPCC found that three MPS officers had a case to answer for gross misconduct connected with their role in events over these last few days of Linah's life. It has however taken nearly two and a half years for the Metropolitan Police Service to convene the hearings starting today.

Linah's sister Susan Asiimwe said:

"David Gikawa is responsible for Linah's death: it was him who took her life. But the police must also answer for their conduct: Linah went to them repeatedly to ask them to protect her. They knew she was at risk but it feels to us like they ignored her, or they just didn't care. It pains me that she trusted them."

"We have struggled for nearly six years with the ongoing investigations. The IOPC report which found that officers have a case to answer for gross misconduct gave me hope that there is some level of transparency. I can only hope that the final hearing will hold the officers to account"

Sophie Naftalin, solicitor for the family said:

"Metropolitan Police officers have a duty to properly assess risk, to properly understand their own powers and policies and to take appropriate action to protect victims of domestic violence. These gross misconduct proceedings are a fundamental part of this family's six year struggle for accountability"

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The gross misconduct hearings will take place between 20 February 2019 and 1 March 2019, at the Metropolitan Police Misconduct Unit, Empress State Building, Lillie Road London SW6 1TR
2. Linah Keza's family is represented by Sophie Naftalin of Bhatt Murphy and Rajeev Thacker of Garden Court Chambers. They have also received support from Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Assault (AAFDA).
3. For further information please contact Sophie Naftalin at Bhatt Murphy on 020 7729 1115 or s.naftalin@bhattmurphy.co.uk