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### **Newcastle Central Station Incident: Fans' Organisation Demands IPCC Resignation**

Sunderland fans criticising a Northumbria police operation at Newcastle Central station have been backed by the Football Supporters' Federation following the release of an assessment of the incident by the independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) earlier this week (PR 1633, 17 August 2009).

The action of Gary Garland, IPCC Commissioner for the North East, in giving the police operation a clean bill of health has drawn severe criticism from FSF chair Dr Malcolm Clarke, who represents football supporters on the Council of the Football Association.

Dr Clarke said, "The FSF are extremely concerned that the verdict arrived at by IPCC Commissioner Gary Garland is dramatically different to the accounts we have received from Sunderland supporters involved in the incident as well as independent eye-witnesses.

"In the days since the incident took place, FSF volunteers have collated a dossier of statements accusing the police of disproportionate use of force, including baton blows to the head and police dog-bites, and failure in their duty of care.

"Fans have been hospitalised as a result of this operation and we believe the severity of their injuries, aligned with the extremely serious nature of the accusations being made against the Northumbria Police operation, mean that the decision of the IPCC to effectively vindicate and clear all the police officers on duty, without interviewing any of the supporters involved, is simply not good enough."

The FSF is concerned that the video footage Mr Garland says "is conclusive that the police in this instance were subjected to a high level of violence by people intent on causing disorder" has not been released into the public domain, and we call for the full footage of all videos of the incident now to be released unedited.



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Dr Clarke continued: “We are extremely surprised that Commissioner Garland was able to conduct a complete review of all the evidence in such a short time and that no proper IPCC investigation of the police action was warranted. Based on the accounts we believe Mr Garland has rushed to judgement without assessing all the evidence.”

By declaring that “the IPCC does not need to play any further role in this matter” and referring the matter back to Northumbria Police to conduct their own investigation, the Football Supporters’ Federation’s believes that the commissioner may have acted outside of his remit and is seeking legal advice.

“For Mr Garland to say that the actions of the police were “understandable, proportionate and justifiable” and then commend officers for their “professionalism and courage” prior to an investigation from Northumbria Police is staggering. His assessment severely compromises the integrity and outcome of any truly objective review the force will be able to make. This is a gross error of judgement, is hugely unprofessional and Mr Garland should resign.”

The FSF will be holding a press conference at 11.00am on Thursday 20 August 2009 at the *Saltgrass* public house in Sunderland to explain in more detail their reasons for demanding a full, independent review of the incident and calling for the resignation of Gary Garland as IPCC Commissioner for the North East. The FSF chair Dr Malcolm Clarke will be present, as will Sunderland fan and FSF National Council member Peter Daykin.

ENDS

Contact Nina Donkin on 08702 777 777 or email [info@fsf.org.uk](mailto:info@fsf.org.uk) to confirm attendance

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Football Supporters’ Federation is a voluntary organisation representing 144,000 fans of clubs and national sides at all levels throughout England & Wales.

The incident in question took place in Newcastle Central Station and involved Black Cats supporters returning from pre-season friendly against Heart of Midlothian FC in Edinburgh on the evening of Saturday 8 August 2009.

