

24 May 2023

Dear Friend

**Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Violence in Leicester,  
August-September 2022**

I am writing to inform you of a forthcoming **Independent Commission of Inquiry**, which will be announced later this week, into the violence that took place in Leicester in 2022 between members of its South Asian communities. I am writing to you in my capacity as the Chair of the Commission of Inquiry.

The Inquiry, which is expected to last a year, seeks to understand the root causes of the disturbances, and create tools to help maintain the city's longstanding reputation for community harmony and prevent future violence. The inquiry is unique and multi-dimensional: it will collect evidence, undertake research, and develop community engagement projects.

Our remit is to examine relevant events that led to the public disturbances of August/September 2022 as well as the aftermath. The work will include producing an evidence-based chronology of key events during the disturbances, investigating the main drivers for the violence and disharmony, investigating the response of statutory agencies regarding these events, and making recommendations for the future.

I am Professor of Human Rights Law at Washington College of Law, American University and was formerly the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment. I have also been a Special Advisor to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

I am joined on the Inquiry Panel by Schona Jolly KC, leading counsel at Cloisters Chambers who has expertise in UK and international equality, anti-discrimination and human rights law and former Chair of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, and Lisa Magarrell, a human rights and transitional justice expert based in New York who was an advisor to the community-based Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission in North Carolina (US).

The Inquiry will be housed at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and will be headed there by Dr Subir Sinha (Department of Development Studies), in conjunction with Professor Chetan Bhatt (Department of Sociology, London School of Economics and Political Science). The Inquiry will be supported by a team of Leicester-based, locally recruited youth workers and community engagement officers coordinated by The Monitoring Group, a nationally known anti-racist charity headed by Suresh Grover. Dr Sinha, Prof Bhatt and Mr Grover, experts in their respective fields, will also join me as part of this multi-disciplinary Inquiry Panel.

It is our intention for the Inquiry to have as much local involvement and participation as is possible. The call for an independent inquiry arose during a series of meetings between Leicester community organizations and The Monitoring Group

during 2022. The Monitoring Group has been working closely with local individuals and community groups in Leicester over the last year. An Advisory Group for the Inquiry, comprised of community experts from Leicester that includes Umesh Patel and Naim Kazi, will advise the Inquiry on local matters. In addition to local knowledge, the Inquiry team reflects knowledge and expertise in law and policy, human rights, anti-discrimination, work in South Asian communities, and academic research.

I would very much welcome your participation and contributions during the course of the Inquiry. The Inquiry will be announced publicly on Friday 26 May. We are committed to high-quality, independent, evidence-based and objective investigation; excellence through the highest standards of professional conduct; and transparency in communications during the investigation.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me on [leicesterinquiry@soas.ac.uk](mailto:leicesterinquiry@soas.ac.uk) if you would like further details about the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Méndez', with a horizontal line underneath.

Juan E Méndez  
Professor of Human Rights Law in Residence, Washington College of Law  
Commissioner, International Commission of Jurists  
Former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, 2010-2016