

Chair of the Inquiry
The Rt. Hon. Lord Bracadale

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Kate Forbes
Deputy First Minister & Cabinet Secretary for
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Via email only: DFMCSEG@gov.scot

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Dear Deputy First Minister

I write to resign as Chair of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry with immediate effect.

In June 2025 I held a hearing on an application by the Scottish Police Federation and other core participants calling on me to recuse myself from further involvement in the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry. The application was advanced on the basis that meetings that I had with members of the families of Sheku Bayoh ("the Families"), without advising other core participants, gave rise to an appearance of bias, and unfairness. They did not suggest that I was actually biased but that my conduct gave rise to an appearance of bias. I gave all core participants an opportunity to make submissions in support of or against the application.

After considering the written and oral submissions, on 13 August 2025 I issued a decision refusing the application. In my decision I dealt in detail with the issues raised in the submissions. I hoped that as a result I had allayed the concerns of the applicants and those core participants who supported the application. I hoped that their confidence in the Inquiry would be restored.

In the event, the Scottish Police Federation raised a judicial review of my decision. A number of core participants entered the process. The process has now reached the stage where the written pleadings have been adjusted and a hearing is due to take place on 17 and 18 November 2025. As the judicial review process developed it

became clear that the concerns about my conduct had not been allayed by my decision and that the criticisms have persisted.

As a result, it is now clear to me that many of the core participants have lost confidence in my conduct of the Inquiry to such an extent that it cannot be retrieved.

All the evidence has now been led. The next stage in the Inquiry is the hearing of closing submissions followed by preparation of the report by the chair. I am concerned that the majority of core participants would have no confidence in the findings of any report prepared by me. I consider that that, in turn, would be likely to have a damaging effect on public confidence in the findings of a report prepared by me and recommendations flowing from it. In my view the best interests of the Inquiry would be served by the appointment of a new chair to whom the existing evidence, all of which is available on tape and transcript, would be available.

As I explained in my decision, the purpose of my meetings with the Families was to obtain and retain their confidence in the Inquiry and their engagement with it. The terms of reference include issues directly relating to the Families: the treatment of them on 3 May 2015; their experience of the subsequent investigations; and the overarching issue of the race of Sheku Bayoh. Given their central role, it seemed to me that the participation of the Families was essential to the Inquiry fulfilling its terms of reference and if they did not engage with it the effectiveness of the Inquiry would be seriously undermined.

The Families had already lost confidence in all the investigating institutions with which they had contact, including Police Scotland, the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. As the Inquiry progressed it became apparent at various points that they were losing confidence in the Inquiry and were likely to cease engaging with it. I consider that if I had not had meetings with members of the Families, it is likely that they would have walked out of the Inquiry.

I very much regret that my conduct in relation to meeting the Families for what I considered to be a reasonable purpose of maintaining their engagement with the Inquiry has led to a loss of confidence by other core participants in my position as Chair.

We have achieved much in the Inquiry so far. In addition to examining thoroughly the events of 3 May 2015, the Inquiry has scrutinised the actions of Police Scotland, the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. At every stage the Inquiry has had regard to the issue of race. In the course of the Inquiry the former Chief Constable of Police Scotland stated that the force was institutionally racist and they have embarked on a programme to address that.

I very much hope that the Scottish Ministers will be able to appoint a new chair in early course in order to restore the confidence of all the core participants in the Inquiry and that the families of Sheku Bayoh will continue to engage with and participate in the Inquiry under a new chair.

Yours sincerely



Alastair P Campbell

The Rt. Hon. Lord Bracadale