



**Launch of StopWatch, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010, 3-5pm The Great Hall, The Stand, Kings College London.**

## **REV. JESSE JACKSON LAUNCHING STOPWATCH**

THANK YOU TO Kings College London Rebekah Delsol of Open Justice Society Justice Initiative, my friend. Karen Chouhan of Equanomics UK for organizing and hosting today's event and inviting me to be with you here today to join in the launch of StopWatch - - - and your campaign to halt racial profiling and ensure that the criminal justice system is JUST and FAIR for us.

I am privileged and honored to back in London – let the best of Britain arise to the challenge of opportunity of a multi-racial, multi-cultural society that reflects the world family. Structural inequality produces ugly results – where fear and hope are polarizing forces. Hope and love do not produce fear, hatred and violence.

Critical issues confront us in the twenty first century – a faltering economy, persistent poverty, entrenched inequality – perhaps the most important ones are the civil rights to be safe and to be free...free from profiling and discrimination based on race, on gender, on sexual preference.

The expectation that we can live our lives in an atmosphere of peace, safety, justice and freedom has always been vital to the civil rights movement. As the Reverend Martin Luther King said: "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".

Sadly, today in the inner cities of Britain and American, many people are fearful. Some fear for their personal safety. They are afraid of their neighbours, especially the young people.

But it is our youth, whose lives are most at risk. Too many young people's lives have been lost or blighted by violence and the fear of violent crime.

Even at a time when crime rates have fallen, and continue to fall, these fears remain. Our young people, Black and ethnic minority communities – become scapegoats, blamed for the ills in our societies.

We've seen a historical pattern of the dangerous and damaging impact of profiling: remember that the roots of the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust lie in religious profiling of

the Jewish people – we witnessed how a supposed “enlightened” culture got caught up in season of terror.

We pray that history will never repeat itself.

We’ve seen apartheid in South Africa – a whole nation “profiled” and separated based on race, for which Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years.

And let us never forget that Slavery – then Segregation and Colonialism – established systems of profiling and subjugation based on race.

Given the German experience, and the South African and US experience with racial profiling and discrimination, you would think we would know better by now.

Britain is seen as an enlightened society, with its high culture and history and universities – but it is no surprise that institutionalized policies of race targeting and race profiling is alive and well here. Structural inequalities and disparities remain – not based on “distribution of brains,” but on distribution of privilege and resources.

It places a special burden on leadership - when racial profiling and discrimination is detected, leadership must find ways to correct it. And stop it.

The structural disparities produced by the discrimination patterns in banking, real estate, education, lack of access of health care – also produces this police-community tension. We must focus on the cause of this tension – the process, not just the results.

Leaders must Stop the Abuse of Stop and Search!

Too many people live in fear for their freedom. Too many fear the police as much as they fear crime. They fear that they may be stopped and searched without good reason, arrested without good cause. They fear that they will have their personal details recorded on camera or recorded on official databases.

With good reason, many people fear that they will be criminalized. All because of their race, or their religion.

In today’s world, that’s a moral disgrace. When racial profiling rears up, leadership must rise up to Detect it. Correct it. Stop it.

Leaders, I say again, must Stop the Abuse of Stop and Search.

We need a higher quality of liberty.

We have a right to expect that the police will be our protectors, not our tormentors.

Police and communities must be allies, not adversaries. We need each other.

We have a right to expect that the police will help to create peaceful and safe communities without unnecessary interference.

We have the right to privacy – and that we not be searched without good reason.

We have a right to be able to move freely, to associate with our friends and neighbours without harassment.

We have a right to demonstrate and to protest, and to be treated fairly and without racism, prejudice or discrimination.

Racial and religious profiling and discrimination undermines the dream and promise of democracy. Democracy promises equal protection under the law, equal access, equal opportunity for all. No one should be denied equal access based upon race, gender, religion - these are anti- democratic forces at play.

And for those who practice the Christian faith, racial and religious profiling is anti- Christian; it defies the Christian moral imperative of treating well, the least of these. We must be judged character and behavior, and not abuse because of race and religion.

Friends, let us rally to Stop the Abuse of Stop and Search.

In the US, we marched, sat in, protested and laid down our lives to pass laws to offset the cultural flow of racial discrimination: we won the Voting Rights Act, the Civil Rights Act, we passed affirmative action laws that made it illegal to discriminate and lock people out based on race, gender, religion and sexual orientation.

We changed institutionalized, cultural patterns...by changing the laws of the land.

The best of Britain – your police and fire and university departments – your institutions....

They must help change behavior.

They must help change attitudes, by example.

But most of all, we must change laws, enforce and fund the laws of justice.

And when we change the law and behavior, then we will change attitudes and minds, and relieve the unfounded fears.

Sadly racial profiling and scapegoating can happen to anyone, anywhere.

We have a term we use in the USA – “driving while black.”

Young Blacks, especially Black men, unfairly being stop and searched by police because they just “don’t look like they should be driving a car, especially a nice car.”

I remember just after my presidential campaign, my son, Jesse, was driving in a convertible car in Illinois (where he now a Congressman) and was stopped by the police for no reason. My other two sons, Jonathan and Yusef, have both been stopped and searched without cause.

I've learned that many high-ranking leaders – even MP David Lammy - in Britain have been unfairly stopped and searched, too.

In Arizona and other states, it's "walking while looking Latino" – our Latino brothers and sisters now at risk of being stopped and searched – perhaps deported – by laws passed that required people to carry Identification cards; of course, Hispanic/Latino immigrants – who have been unfairly accused of "being in the country illegally," of "taking jobs away from Americans - are being targeted and threatened with deportation.

I understand that Parliament passed a similar law allowing the police to stop and search people based on ethnicity.

Just like apartheid South Africa, Latinos may have to carry Identification Cards to "prove their legal status."

Hysteria around the "war on terror" have resulted in members of our Islamic community being unfairly targeted – "stopped and searched," without due process or reason, placed under a cloud of suspicion of being "terrorists."

Britain has faced its own challenges as it seeks to build an inclusive society based on equality, fairness and justice – a new Britain where former British "subjects" – from the Caribbean, from Africa, India - now comprise a growing segment of British society.

I recall the uprisings in Bristol, Brixton, Birmingham and Liverpool and towns and cities across the country in the 1980s – outbursts of anger, frustration and resentment against police racism.

I recall the failed investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the public outcry that followed.

This led to the landmark OFFICIAL conclusion that institutional racism afflicted the British police...and set the tone for potential reform.

.... Only to find that, today, some British leaders now claim that institutional racism no longer exists. That racism, and racial inequality no longer exists.

Friends, we are NOT in a post-racial world. That is not the objective – we must strive for a post - RACIST world. We must affirm multi-culturalism and multi-racial coexistence, and learn to live together in shared affirmation.

Racial profiling and Racial Disparities exist today just as in the 1970s', and leaders must Detect it. They must Correct it. They must Stop it.

Leaders, my friends, must Stop the Abuse of Stop and Search.

The use of police powers against black people in this country is disproportionate as it is in America, if not worse.

1. On the streets, black people are subjected to what one government report describes as an "excess" of 145,000 stop and searches in 2008. Black people constitute less than 3% of the population, yet made up 15% of people stopped by police.

2. One police power to stop and search – section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act – is used 26 times more often against black people and 6 times more frequently against Asian people than against white people.

3. Black people are stopped and searched by the police in public places 7 times more frequently than you would expect from their number in the population – 27 times more likely when using the power to stop and search without suspicion.

4. The UK Terrorism Act is being used far beyond its intended purpose: People of Asian origin are stopped twice more than you would expect from their number in the population, especially as they travel into the country. The Terrorism Act is also being used to target protesters and photographers and for religious profiling. The right to the presumption of innocence is undermined by detention under the Terrorism Act as though people were actual terrorists [Schedule 7]. They routinely have their DNA and fingerprints taken and placed on the DNA database - a recent government report that states that three quarters of young black men are now on the national DNA database.

5. These powers lack of safeguards, are an abuse of civil rights. They undermine the right to protest and to freedom of movement, and have a discriminatory impact.

If you want to host the Olympics, you must learn from its higher principles: equal opportunity, even playing field, public rules and transparency, clear goals and a fair referee. Don't leave beneath the standards of the Olympics, and have this ugly behavior blemish your reputation with the world watching.

Unfair policing and police policies must end – today! Now, more than ever, people's rights must be defended, protected, preserved....

But profiling and discrimination doesn't stop with Stop and Search. Racial disparities abound in the criminal justice system:

The UK Ministry of Justice reports that Black prisoners make up 15% of the prisoner population, but make up just 2.2% of the general population. In the U.S. Blacks are about 12% of the US population, but 40% to 45% of the US prison population is black.

77% of murder victims in London between 2007-2009 were Black and in 2008/9 92% of London young offenders sentenced to life imprisonment were Black.

The same is true in the U.S. where there is racial profiling in arrests and detention--disparities between the nature of the crime, and those that do the time. Whites commit 75 percent of all urban crime, yet blacks and Latinos make up 80 percent of the arrests. There is racial profiling in the subprime lending crisis, where blacks and Latinos were steered into subprime loans.

This is not a hallmark of a free society. It is evident that British society still does not treat all of its citizens with fairness and equality. This is unjust. Targeting people because of their race, religion or colour of their skin is unfair. It is ineffective. It is often counterproductive. And it should be against the law.

Britain, a great democracy, must have a level playing field for all of its people. Not to do so is a moral disgrace.

Leaders, I say again, must Detect it. They must Correct it. They must Stop it with official law. They must stop Racial profiling and the Stop the Abuse of Stop and Search.

Leadership must see the urgency of it, not benefit from it . . . the walls of separation and disparity remain high because they are constantly erected for political exploitation. Today we need bold leadership that will not exploit racial and religious polarization for narrow and dangerous political ends.

Policing – and Government - should be FOR the people and WITH the people. Not AGAINST the people.

That is why I am here today to support the launch of Stop Watch – a new coalition of activists committed to eliminating racial discrimination in policing, bringing an end to racial profiling and finding better ways of keeping communities safe and peaceful.

Generations inherit bad habits of culture: we have learned to survive apart in our own ethnic zones, now a greater challenge is that we must learn to live together in a multi-cultural, multi-language setting – we are many cultures, with one message.

### **Dream Beyond Your Circumstances**

The prophet Isaiah speaks of beauty from the ashes—where ashes abound beauty must abound even more. Where hatred abounds, love must abound even more. Where fear abounds, love and hope must abound even more. Fear limits us – hope unleashes creative genius.

I want to say to you young people especially—keep reaching beyond your grasp, keep dreaming beyond your circumstances, keep dreaming of a new Europe. When young people move, the world changes.

Dream beyond your age. Dr. King was only 26 when he took on the leadership of the Montgomery bus boycott. Jesus was only 33 when he died. Dream beyond your age.

Dream beyond your race and ethnicity. Build coalitions. Without an active and vocal worldwide movement for change, we cannot make our hopes for a new world a lasting and concrete reality.

When twelve abolitionists met together two-and-a-quarter centuries ago in London to fight back against the profitable slave trade, few thought they would succeed. But they persisted, Wilberforce prevailed, and the slave trade was soon ended. Dream a new world.

Dream a new freedom, of a new justice.

Dream of a new day. Dream of a new way.

Dream of a new Britain, an emerging Europe.

Red Yellow Brown Black and White. We are all precious in God's sight.

Go forward by hope and never backward by fear.

Keep faith—and in the end, faith will not disappoint.

Keep Hope Alive!

Thank you very much.