

Immigrant killed by New York City police buried in Guinea

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Amadou Diallo, the Guinean immigrant gunned down by New York City police on February 5, was buried in his native village of Djountou on February 17. Hundreds of Guineans stood in the blazing heat to console Amadou's family as they returned from New York with the body.

Kadiadou Diallo, Amadou's mother, told the mourners, "We thank everyone who shares this feeling of sorrow with us and those who made it possible for our son to return home like a high-ranking official."

Plainclothes officers from the New York City police Street Crimes Unit fired a total of 41 bullets at the unarmed man outside his residence in the Bronx. Diallo, 22, had been living in New York City and working as a street peddler for more than two years.

Diallo's execution-style killing has provoked international outrage and once again focused attention on the pervasive racism and brutality in the police force of the wealthiest city in the world. The New York Police Department is known for its use of excessive force, most often targeting black and Hispanic youth.

Two of the officers involved in the shooting are currently under investigation for previous complaints lodged against them. Citing fear of self-incrimination, the officers involved have not yet issued statements. Police commissioner Howard Safir is keeping them on the force in administrative positions.

When Mayor Rudolph Guiliani and commissioner Safir showed up for the memorial held for Diallo in Harlem, they had to be physically protected from an angry crowd. Since the shooting, Guiliani has solidarized himself with the Street Crimes Unit, calling the shooting an isolated incident and praising the unit's efforts to reducing crime.

Officers of the Street Crimes Unit, whose numbers have increased from 100 to 400 in the last few years,

carry out nightly "search and destroy" missions. Their motto is "We own the night." There is reportedly an unwritten quota system among its officers requiring that they seize at least one illegal gun per month. Two years ago several members of the unit designed and distributed T-shirts among their fellow cops with the following quotation from Hemingway: "Certainly there is no hunting like the hunting of man, and those who have hunted armed men long enough and liked it, never really care for anything else thereafter."

On the night Amadou Diallo was killed, the Street Crimes Unit was patrolling the Soundview section of the Bronx looking for a rapist described as a young black man in his early 20s. A police sketch distributed to cops resembled any one of the thousands of young black men who live in the area.



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