

## **Not in my name**

by Andaiye

Posted September 27th. 2004

If we look at the recent killings by police and civilian criminals through the eyes of the children who witnessed them, we ought to be able to see past our usual racial/political party blinders. How can any of us find it acceptable that children should see their parents gunned down?

Guyana - or at least, coastal Guyana - is split straight down the middle. An African-Guyanese is shot down by the Black Clothes police and Indian-Guyanese opinion sees this as a legitimate attack on crimes against them, while African Guyanese see it as more evidence that their (our) lives are worth nothing. Lost in all this is the fact that these killings fuel more rage without doing anything at all to reduce violent crime.

On the other "side", when an Indian-Guyanese is killed, Indian-Guyanese understand this as an assault on their community, while African-Guyanese say it has nothing to do with race, but with drug wars. There are two problems here: one, they don't know that this is true and two, even if it is true, what is the argument? That executing people because of a deal gone sour is legitimate? Isn't this another kind of extra-judicial killing?

I return to where I started. Think of the children who, in two separate killings last week, saw their parents murdered! How can we tolerate this?

Finally, for now. I have not seen the two leaflets distributed by men describing themselves as "freedom fighters", but friends I trust have seen them and tell me it's true that they describe themselves as freedom fighters on behalf of the African Guyanese nation. To this my answer is, as one African Guyanese: "No. Not in my name.

I do not know what acts you have committed since you left prison, killing one man and wounding one woman in the process. But at the very least you are driving fear into children, women and men who have done nothing to deserve it, and you cannot do so in my name."