

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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UK: Amnesty International's Secretary General meets McCartney sisters

Today, Amnesty International's Secretary General, Irene Khan, and Amnesty International UK's Director, Kate Allen, met with three of the sisters of Robert McCartney - Catherine, Paula and Gemma.

At the meeting, the Secretary General pledged the organization's full support for the McCartney family's call for justice and not revenge for the murder of Robert McCartney.

The McCartney family's call for justice, rather than revenge, is a commendable demonstration of courage in today's world, and the organization supports the family and fiancée of Robert McCartney in their campaign to ensure that the perpetrators of his killing in Belfast on 30 January 2005 are brought to justice.

The search for justice by the sisters and fiancée of Robert McCartney is a powerful reminder to us all of how individuals, motivated by a sense of justice, can help a society embrace fundamental change and lead to better respect for human rights.

Last week one man was charged with the murder of Robert McCartney, and another with the attempted murder of his friend Brendan Devine. However, like the McCartney family, Amnesty International believes that a number of others were also involved in the attack, including those who were responsible in a cover-up operation which apparently took place in its immediate aftermath. Amnesty International believes that they too should be brought to justice.

The organization condemns unreservedly any intimidation of witnesses who wish to provide information to the authorities in connection with the killing of Robert McCartney and any other criminal acts. The rule of law can only be upheld if witnesses are able to present information, free from the fear or threat of intimidation or reprisal.

Amnesty International has also condemned unreservedly the threats made against the McCartney sisters in mid-May 2005. The organization calls on the UK authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the McCartney sisters and their family members.

Background

Robert McCartney was killed in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on 30 January 2005 as a result of an attack outside a pub near the town centre. His friend, Brendan Devine, was also seriously injured in the attack.

According to the PSNI, the attack was carried out by members of the Provisional IRA, although

not sanctioned by the group.