

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI Index: EUR.45/010/2007 (Public)
News Service No: 119
25 June 2007

United Kingdom: Amnesty International's response to the announcement by the Northern Irish prosecuting authorities that no prosecutions are to follow from the Stevens III investigation

Today (25 June 2007), after an unconscionable and inordinate delay -- more than four years after receipt of many individual files from the Stevens III investigation into matters of collusion in Northern Ireland -- the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) for Northern Ireland has announced that no-one is to be charged following the review of the material submitted by the Stevens III investigation.

The DPP explained that prosecutions could not be brought mainly because the evidence would not satisfy the "Test for Prosecution", namely, that "the available and admissible evidence is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction and prosecution is required in the public interest".

Amnesty International considers that this announcement represents an indictment of the administration of criminal justice in Northern Ireland and the prosecutorial authorities, in particular.

The fact that much of the DPP's decision appears to hinge on the absence of evidence simply reinforces concern about the extent to which state officials have been involved in a cover-up in respect of their collusion with paramilitary organizations in the perpetration of serious human rights abuses.

Amnesty International considers that rather than reassuring the victims, their families and the public at large that the rule of law has been respected, this decision actually reinforces concern that there has been a complete failure on the part of state authorities to ensure accountability for serious human rights abuses.

In light of today's announcement, Amnesty International reiterates its call on the UK authorities to immediately institute a properly independent judicial inquiry, held in public, into the 1989 killing of human rights lawyer Patrick Finucane.