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UK: Rights Groups Welcome McBride Court Ruling

Five human rights organizations have today welcomed the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal's judgment in respect of the murder of Peter McBride in 1992. The McBride family have for years been challenging the decision by the army to continue to employ Guardsmen Fisher and Wright even though they had been convicted of Mr McBride's murder.

The Court of Appeal today found that the reasons given by the army for the retention of Fisher and Wright did not amount to the "exceptional reasons" required under Queen's regulations dealing with soldiers convicted of criminal offences. As a result of this judgment the Army Board will have to reconsider the case yet again.

A spokesperson for Amnesty International, British Irish Rights Watch, the Committee on the Administration of Justice, the Pat Finucane Centre and Liberty said:

"It is clear that in deciding not to discharge Guardsmen Fisher and Wright, the army has thus far failed to recognise the gravity of the human rights violation which they committed. The decision to "exceptionally" retain the two soldiers in the armed forces has fostered impunity and undermined effective redress for the victim's family."

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