

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: EUR 45/031/2003 (Public)
News Service No: 287
18 December 2003

United Kingdom: Publish Cory reports now, human rights groups urge government

Five leading human rights organisations today called upon the British government to publish without delay the reports by Judge Peter Cory, a retired Canadian Supreme Court Judge, into the deaths of Patrick Finucane, Robert Hamill, Billy Wright and Rosemary Nelson.

A spokesperson for the groups (Amnesty International, British Irish Rights Watch, the Committee on the Administration of Justice, Human Rights Watch and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights) said that "the government has now had the reports for more than two months. We believe there is no basis for any further delay in making the reports public."

The groups expressed concern that the delay was causing distress to the families concerned, and that it also continued to undermine public confidence in the rule of law.

"The reason Judge Cory was appointed was because the government acknowledged there was public concern about these cases of alleged official collusion. The delay in publication is now increasing that concern," the spokesperson added.

Paul Mageean from CAJ said "We believe that the UK government is obliged under domestic and international law to immediately establish full public international judicial inquiries into the cases of Patrick Finucane, Robert Hamill, Billy Wright and Rosemary Nelson. Continuing delay will only result in a greater erosion of public confidence in the rule of law and may result in the loss of further important testimonies."

Background

Justice Peter Cory was appointed by the UK and Irish governments in May 2002 to investigate a number of cases including the killings of human rights lawyers Patrick Finucane and Rosemary Nelson, in 1989 and 1999, respectively; the 1997 sectarian killing of Robert Hamill, a 25-year-old Catholic man; and the 1997 killing of Billy Wright, a leading Loyalist paramilitary, shot dead in the Maze prison.

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