

## Defending human rights defenders, defending human rights

February 2009 marks the twentieth anniversary of the murder of defence lawyer Pat Finucane. Next month brings the tenth anniversary of the murder of Rosemary Nelson. In its examination of the UK government last year, the UN Human Rights Committee stated:

*"The Committee remains concerned that, a considerable time after murders (including of human rights defenders) in Northern Ireland have occurred, several inquiries into these murders have still not been established or concluded, and that those responsible for these deaths have not yet been prosecuted. ..."*

***The State party should conduct, as a matter of particular urgency given the passage of time, independent and impartial inquiries in order to ensure a full, transparent and credible account of the circumstances surrounding violations of the right to life in Northern Ireland."***

This special edition of Just News is dedicated to these two courageous human rights defenders. Contributions from the Finucane family remind us of the pain and trauma that the family have experienced over the last twenty years, but how they have channelled this pain into a valiant and formidable campaign. International contributors remind us of the attention that this case has drawn and continues to draw around the world, and the lesson it teaches for defending those who protect human rights around the world. A chronology of the last twenty years brings into sharp focus the complex web that the death of Pat Finucane weaves. Despite the complexity, two very simple facts prevail - a lawyer lost his life and the state consistently failed to meet its human rights obligations to protect that life. CAJ will continue to support the Finucane family in their call for a fully independent and impartial inquiry into the death of Pat, and continue to inform international bodies of the ongoing failure of the UK government to meet its human rights obligations in this regard.

Rosemary Nelson was a member of CAJ's Executive Committee at the time of her death and CAJ worked with Rosemary to highlight the threats and intimidation that she had experienced at a domestic and international level. As the chair of CAJ expressed at the time of her murder:

*"The human rights community had hoped that by focussing international attention on the harassment and intimidation of lawyers that we could maximise their protection, that we could make it too politically embarrassing to repeat Pat Finucane's murder a decade ago. We were wrong."*

Since then we have campaigned with others for an inquiry to be established, and since its establishment have been observing its proceedings. With other national and international human rights' organisations CAJ has been distressed to hear and read baseless accusations regarding Rosemary Nelson as a individual and concerning her personal life. Character assassination was not within the remit of this Inquiry's mandate. Rather the terms for reference of the Inquiry are:

*"To inquire into the death of Rosemary Nelson with a view to determining whether any wrongful act or omission by or within the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Northern Ireland Office, Army or other state agency facilitated her death or obstructed the investigation of it, or whether attempts were made to do so; whether any such act or omission was intentional or negligent; whether the investigation of her death was carried out with due diligence; and to make recommendations."*

These terms of reference reflect the duty of the state to protect the lives of its citizens and carry out proper investigations where those lives are taken as established under international law. They do not, nor should they, allow insinuations or implications that Rosemary was somehow responsible for her own death. Every person has the right to life and the state has a duty to protect it - that is the fundamental human rights standard and CAJ will continue to campaign for it to be respected and protected.

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# International Standards on Human Rights Defenders

## The Human Rights Defenders Program of Human Rights First

**While we mark the anniversaries of the deaths of Patrick Finucane and Rosemary Nelson this year, December was also the tenth anniversary of a document that celebrates and supports the work of human rights defenders. In 1998 the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which states:**

*“Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels.”*

The Declaration reaffirms the right to meet and assemble peacefully; to form and join organizations; to publish information about human rights; and to enjoy access to international bodies. On the question of impunity, the agreement restates the obligation of states to investigate all violations of human rights, including those contained in the Declaration itself. The Declaration also incorporates the right to receive funding for the first time, a right not articulated in any human rights standard and a frequent target of government restrictions.

The Declaration includes many rights found in existing treaties. But it is still a significant document: the Declaration reaffirmed these rights with direct reference to defenders, reminding governments of their obligations and promoting the concept of human right defenders at all levels. The Declaration has encouraged the creation of one important UN special procedure and several regional mechanisms.

To support the implementation of the Declaration, the Commission on Human Rights created the position of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders in 2000. (The title was changed to Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders in 2008.) The mandate of the Special Rapporteur calls on her to seek and respond to information; conduct dialogue with governments and other actors; recommend effective strategies to protect human rights defenders and follow up on these recommendations; and integrate a gender perspective throughout her work. The Special Rapporteur makes country visits, takes up individual cases with governments, and reports to the Human Rights Council and General Assembly on common trends. Human Rights First is one of several organizations that work closely with the Special Rapporteur.

Northern Ireland has been the subject of communications from the first holder of the mandate, Hina Jilani. For example, in a 2002 report, Jilani concluded that “... a prompt and independent judicial investigation into the

*murders of lawyer Patrick Finucane in 1989 and solicitor Rosemary Nelson in 1999 are essential in order to restore a secure environment for human rights defenders in Northern Ireland.”*

Regional bodies have begun to enact mechanisms to protect human rights defenders in Africa, the Americas, and Europe. The EU’s Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders also provides guidance supporting defenders in third countries.

The Declaration, the UN Special Rapporteur, and the regional mechanisms play an important role in protecting defenders. But like many such mechanisms, their efficacy is limited in the face of national governments that lack the political will to recognize and protect defenders. Attacks on defenders continue, in the form of violence, intimidation, surveillance, and legal restrictions, while impunity for crimes against defenders remains the norm in many countries.

The protection of defenders is a moving target. Some governments have found new ways to use registration requirements and to misuse the courts to silence defenders without overt violence. In the last eight years the spectre of terrorism has been used effectively to silence and intimidate government critics. New technology has helped defenders access and disseminate information, but has also given governments new tools to monitor and censor them. The last decade has seen a growing awareness of the gender-specific risks that women defenders face, such as intimidation from their own communities or threats to their families.

In 1998 Kofi Annan said, “*The Declaration rests on a basic premise: that when the rights of human rights defenders are violated, all our rights are put in jeopardy and all of us are made less safe.*” This is yet one more reason that the deaths of human rights defenders like Patrick Finucane and Rosemary Nelson must not be forgotten. Looking forward, to support defenders and the populations they protect, international agreements and mechanisms must increase their effectiveness while adapting to changing circumstances. For their part, national governments must increase the security of defenders by changing laws, policies, and rhetoric that endanger them, instituting protective measures, and ending impunity.

**Matt Easton**  
**Director,**  
**Human Rights Defenders Program**  
**Human Rights First**

## 20th anniversary of Patrick's death

"As we approach the 20th anniversary of the murder of Patrick Finucane on February 12th 2009, we are reminded once again, if it were required, that the residue of our unresolved past continues to cast a dark uneasy shadow over a society attempting to permanently pull itself from conflict. The allegation that the State killed an Officer of its Court remains unanswered, and the human rights violations carried out by its agencies remain as controversial today as they did 20 years ago. Yet as another anniversary looms, I simply miss my father. Whilst proud of his life and his legacy, the loss remains as acute today as it did when I was 8 years old.

Much has happened since February 1989, our society is virtually unrecognisable from a place riven by hatred and conflict to one that is increasingly based on respect, tolerance and understanding. Yet the pace of change continues to frustrate many, including my family. Since 1989 we have uncovered evidence which implicates the British government in a policy which resulted in the deaths of many, and with a result which not only undermined and perverted the rules of law and justice, but, most importantly perhaps, continues to threaten the state of peace which exists today.

Following Pat's murder, as a family we began asking questions. Such a killing may not have been in itself unusual for the time, but the circumstances certainly required explanation. We knew Pat, like other lawyers, had received repeated death threats via the RUC in interrogation centres such as Castlereagh. This situation was heightened in gravity when Junior Home Office Minister Douglas Hogg spoke in the House of Commons and stated that 'some solicitors in Northern Ireland were unduly sympathetic to the IRA'. Less than 6 weeks later, my father was dead.

Since 1989 we have exposed that many police and army agents were involved in the planning, execution and cover-up of the murder and reported to their handlers at all times. It is also worth remembering that since 1989, all those who have concerned themselves with human rights in Ireland have backed our calls for a full inquiry. Sir John Stevens, Britain's most senior police officer at the time, pursued his own investigation. His findings were chilling. In his own words, they revealed 'collusion, the wilful failure to keep records, the absence of accountability, the withholding of intelligence and evidence and the extreme of agents being involved in murder'.

Retired Canadian Supreme Court Judge Peter Cory was appointed by the British and Irish governments to examine

the circumstances of Pat's killing. He was afforded unprecedented access to secret files and papers, and without hesitation called for an independent inquiry. He has since stated that he saw papers marked for 'cabinet attention'.

We have been fortunate to receive assistance and support from individuals, groups and organisations who have backed our calls for an international independent public judicial inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Pat's murder, and CAJ deserve much praise and recognition. At a time when it was both unpopular and dangerous to accuse the police and British Army of wrongdoing, CAJ realised that the allegations the State carried out a policy of murder by proxy required deeper scrutiny and examination, and facilitated an international input into the solution. Commitment to human rights and the truth has brought our campaign to the stage whereby the British government has reluctantly accepted that an inquiry is necessary, and this would not have been possible had it not been for the efforts of CAJ.

The issue of collusion in my father's murder and as a wider policy which requires examination has been subject to extreme controversy since the term first came to prominence in the early 1990s. The criminal justice system has shown itself incapable or unwilling to deal with the problem. Coroner's courts seem open to frustration, and it has not been by accident that we have strongly advocated a public inquiry as a vehicle to expose the truth. Interestingly though, it appears that in the absence of defending attacks surrounding the veracity of claims of collusion, we find ourselves having to defend a legal process which any strong confident democracy should be proud of.

The Inquiries Act 2005 has not only prevented the truth emerging in my father's murder, but it fundamentally shifts the balance of power towards an executive with every reason to suppress and hide from the truth. Universally criticised as a piece of legislation, we now remain as determined as ever in our pursuit of the truth, and continue to campaign for an inquiry as recommended by Judge Cory in his report.

We already know the truth can be painful. But no matter how difficult, we must demand it, for it is the only thing that can truly support the foundations of a new society. Lies cannot. Deception cannot."

**John Finucane**

# PATRICK FINUCANE: THE LAST TWO YEARS A CHRONOLOGY OF COLLUSION

## 1989

In early January 1989, Douglas Hogg MP was briefed by the RUC that some lawyers were “fellow travellers” with their paramilitary clients, leading him to make his infamous remark in Parliament, on 17th January, that some solicitors were unduly sympathetic to the IRA. When Pat Finucane was shot in front of his wife and family on 12th February 1989, people realised that Hogg had set the stage; no-one had an inkling of the extraordinary developments that would follow this brutal murder.

In a way, the chain reaction started by accident. Loyalists, stung by allegations that they were killing Catholics like Laughlin Maginn at random, proudly published the fact that members of the security forces were passing them information about alleged IRA suspects. For the first time, collusion entered the public’s awareness. In consequence, in September 1989 John (now Lord) Stevens was called in to conduct the police investigation which came to be known as Stevens 1. This led to the uncovering of the British Army Force Research Unit (FRU), an intelligence outfit that infiltrated spies into the paramilitary groups.

## 1990

In May 1990 a summary of the Stevens 1 report was published; it found that collusion was limited to a few “rotten apples”. In September 1990 the RUC told Pat Finucane’s inquest that he was not an IRA member, as the UDA had claimed.

## 1992

It becomes clear that one of FRU’s spies was Brian Nelson, who was convicted in January 1992 on five counts of conspiracy to murder, none of them charges related to Pat Finucane. Nelson received the very light sentence of 10 years, and died in April 2003. However, Nelson had told Stevens that FRU knew who killed Pat Finucane. In June 1992 BBC journalist John Ware broadcast the first of a series of Panorama documentaries which began to lift the

veil of secrecy surrounding his death. The government responded by calling in Stevens for a second time. The Stevens 2 report was never published, but there is general public awareness that it uncovered more pieces of the jigsaw concerning FRU’s involvement in Pat’s murder.

## 1999

On the tenth anniversary of Pat’s murder (12th February 1999), British Irish RIGHTS WATCH passed a secret report to the British and Irish governments and the UN, detailing everything that was known about Pat’s murder. The report provided clear evidence, much of it obtained from secret sources, that FRU, Special Branch and MI5 had all probably colluded in the murder of the high profile lawyer.

BIRW called for a public inquiry, but the government responded by setting up Stevens 3 in April 1999. This led to the arrest of Billy Stobie, who had supplied the weapons for the murder. As a result, journalist Ed Moloney fought a long legal battle to protect his notes of interviews with Stobie.

## 2001

Stobie stood trial but the trial collapsed in November 2001 because of the incapacity of one of the key witnesses, journalist Neil Mulholland, to whom Stobie had confessed his role as early as June 1990. It also emerged that Stobie was an RUC Special Branch agent, and that his handlers were fully aware of Pat’s murder. On 12th December 2001 Stobie was murdered after calling for a public inquiry into Pat’s case during a television interview.

In the meantime, the British and Irish governments were trying to patch up the ailing peace process. In August 2001 they signed the Weston Park Agreement, under which the UK government promised to allow an independent judge to consider Patrick Finucane’s case and five others where collusion was alleged. In the event that the judge recommended a public inquiry, the UK pledged it would hold one.

## 2003



# 20 YEARS. UNVEILED

Judge Cory, a former judge of the Canadian Supreme Court, took on this role. He was appointed in May 2002 and he delivered his reports to the UK government in October 2003. He recommended public inquiries into all four of the Northern Ireland cases – Robert Hamill, Rosemary Nelson, Billy Wright and Pat Finucane. The UK did establish inquiries in the first three cases, but they used the fact that Stevens 3 was still conducting a criminal investigation to delay a decision in Pat's case.

In April 2003 a summary of the Stevens 3 report was published. It confirmed that Pat Finucane was never in the IRA and gave the first official confirmation that his murder involved state collusion. Stevens also revised his view that collusion was neither widespread nor systemic.

## 2004

Stevens 3 eventually led to the arrest of Ken Barrett, who in September 2004 was convicted of the murder, the only person thus convicted. He was released after two years in jail under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement.

## 2005

Deprived of Stevens 3 as an excuse for delay, the government moved the goalposts by saying that it was not possible to hold a public inquiry into Pat's case under the current legislation. In April 2005 they passed the Inquiries Act, which effectively abolished public inquiries and wrested control of inquiries from independent judges and placed it in the hands of government ministers. In Pat Finucane's case, this meant that the government would be investigating itself and its own agents. On 16th April 2005 Judge Cory wrote a letter to an American congressional committee stating that the Inquiries Act could not provide the kind of thoroughgoing inquiry that he had recommended.

## 2009

Today, twenty years on from this callous murder, no state actor has been held accountable and the government has broken its promise to the Finucane family of an independent public inquiry. It is ironic that Patrick Finucane, who fought so hard to obtain justice for others, is still waiting for justice two decades later.

**Jane Winter**  
Director  
British Irish RIGHTS WATCH ([www.birw.org](http://www.birw.org))

*"I believe that my role as a lawyer in defending the rights of my clients is vital. The test of a new society in Northern Ireland will be the extent to which it can recognise and respect that role and enable me to discharge it without improper interference."*



Testimony of Rosemary Nelson to the International Operations and Human Rights Subcommittee of the United States Congress International Relations Committee, 29 September 1998 (six months before her murder)

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## International Interest in the Nelson and Finucane Cases

**The cases of Pat Finucane and Rosemary Nelson attracted critical international interest even before they became cases. Each lawyer had already established a global reputation before their murders. Those murders tragically raised their profiles still higher, and drew renewed interest in Northern Ireland's human rights problems at critical times. Today their cases continue to generate worldwide scrutiny over how Northern Ireland deals with justice, truth, and reconciliation.**

In life, Pat Finucane first made a name as a solicitor representing clients known around the world. Soon he would assume the transnational stage himself, bringing landmark cases before the European Court of Human Rights. Transnational lawyer led to transnational mention, not least by such global NGOs like Human Rights Watch.

With this murder, international attention developed into an international outcry. Global NGOs were among the first to respond with investigations of the killing, of threats against Northern Ireland lawyers, and of the human rights situation in general. The New York-based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, now Human Rights First, called for an independent inquiry starting with its 1993 landmark report, *Human Rights and Legal Defense in Northern Ireland*, based on a mission to Belfast the previous year. A regular beat of missions, reports, and testimony has followed ever since. From London, British Irish Rights Watch undertook its own ongoing campaign focusing on exhaustive research and engagement with British officials. Other leading groups have also repeatedly raised the case, including various branches of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

The killing of a prominent human rights lawyer also galvanized the legal community almost everywhere other than, at least at first, Northern Ireland itself. The New York City Bar Association, boasting a membership of 22,000 lawyers around the world, also has pressed for an independent investigation in missions, reports, and white papers. The City Bar still annually raises both the Finucane and Nelson cases in meetings with UK officials in New York. Other lawyers groups that have issued similar expressions of concern have included the Law Society of England and Wales, the American Bar Association, and the International Bar Association.

The Finucane case has received extensive media coverage in such journals as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *The Economist*, and *Toronto's Globe and Mail*. The *Times'* coverage reflects Finucane's ongoing prominence. A search of the paper's online archives reveals dozens of stories on Patrick Finucane. Nor has all the attention been simple reporting. In an usual step for a

foreign case, the *New York Times* editorial page in 2002 joined a global chorus calling for an "open and independent investigation" without which "London will never allay suspicion."

All this informal interest has in turn led to formal consideration. Perhaps most notable in this regard is the continuing scrutiny of the United States Congress. Committees of both the House and Senate have regularly taken up both the Finucane and Nelson cases for years. Each has taken testimony. Each also introduced resolutions that among other things call for, "to establish immediately a full, independent, public judicial inquiry into the murder of Patrick Finucane . . . which would enjoy the full cooperation of the family of Patrick Finucane and the wider community throughout Ireland and abroad."

The case of Rosemary Nelson has had a similar global impact for similar reasons. Nelson's defense of high profile paramilitary clients led to regular death threats, which in turn led Param Cumaraswamy, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, who highlighted these threats in his annual report, and stated in a television interview that he believed her life could be in danger.

Nelson's murder echoed and amplified the international response that Finucane's killing generated ten years earlier. The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International all condemned the murder and viewed the circumstances as meriting an independent public inquiry. So too did lawyers groups, with the New York City Bar Association again playing a leading role. As with Finucane, the international media took up the Nelson case as well, with the same media outlets pressing her cause. Nelson's cause was also taken up by Congress, before whom she had testified, and where one member declared her killing to be a "brutal" and "cowardly" act, noted the UK government's failure to address either her concerns or those of the UN Rapporteur, and also called for an independent inquiry.

The path toward inquiries in each case has been long, frustrating, and tortured. The Nelson Inquiry has yet to prove its worth, while a satisfactory inquiry into the Finucane case has yet to be established. Neither case, however, will fade away in no small part because international concern about each case is not about to fade either.

**Martin Flaherty**  
**Leitner Family Professor of International Human Rights, Fordham Law School, New York City; Visiting Professor, Princeton University**

## Rosemary Nelson Case

While this issue of Just News and a major international conference in Dublin will be appropriately marking the 20th anniversary of the death of Pat Finucane, we should also remember that it will be ten years in March since the murder of Rosemary Nelson. That time has passed remarkably quickly and while not everything on the human rights agenda in 1999 has been achieved, it is startling to read the evidence being given in the inquiry into her death to be reminded of bad the situation was then and how much change has occurred in the intervening period.

In addition to reminding us how bad things were in the mid-late 90s, the evidence given to date has also been peppered with a number of startling inconsistencies between evidence given by senior state and police witnesses. It has also given us a unique insight into how the most senior "intelligence" figures in Northern Ireland operated at the time.

First there is the issue of the Special Branch file. CAJ understands that Colin Port, the senior English police officer who was brought in to investigate the murder was told that Special Branch did not have a file on Rosemary. However, according to evidence given to the inquiry by a person who became head of Special Branch in 1998, there was a file on Rosemary from as early as 1996. The procedure was that if three or four reports mentioning a particular individual came into Special Branch, a file was created unless there was sufficient interest to create one before that. This process is likely to have led to files being created on hundreds of thousands of individuals.

Then there are the allegations that Rosemary was actively assisting the IRA in Lurgan and involved in a relationship with a local IRA commander. According to the same senior intelligence officer, who remember was head of Special Branch at the time of Rosemary's murder:

*"I certainly think the position that we held was that she had a very close association with terrorists in the Lurgan area and that she helped them to achieve their objectives. And if one can sort of make the conclusion that by those actions she then makes herself a terrorist then perhaps yes that's the conclusion one would come to."*

This is a startling allegation and to those who knew Rosemary at the time, one that is almost as stupid as it is outrageous. When he is challenged as to why if this was a genuine belief on the part of the police, a complaint was not made to the Law Society or indeed a criminal investigation commenced, one of the reasons the witness gives is that such an investigation would have meant diverting resources from other work! In other words, he is seriously suggesting that Special Branch thought

Rosemary was actively assisting IRA suspects in the Lurgan area, and therefore presumably disrupting a large number of police investigations, but that financial constraints meant they could not afford to investigate her.

Just News readers might also be interested to know that in the aftermath of the murder this same "intelligence" chief considered the possibility that the attack might have been a "republican bombing posing as a loyalist bombing to destabilize the peace process". So we are asked to believe the following: Rosemary Nelson was having an affair with a person they believed to be the IRA commander in Lurgan, she was actively helping the IRA in Lurgan to commit offences but the IRA in Lurgan might have killed her in an effort to make it look like a loyalist attack to undermine the peace process that republicans were engaged in at the time.

One might have thought that was all a bad enough reflection on the "intelligence" community. However, while Rosemary's case was fast becoming an international cause célèbre, it appears that none of these senior officers shared their beliefs with the Chief Constable, Ronnie Flanagan. He received almost daily "intelligence" briefings but in his evidence he claims that his senior "intelligence" officers did not share with him their belief that Rosemary was committing criminal offences or involved in a relationship with a local IRA commander. He also did not know that she had a Special Branch file. Sir Ronnie was also at a loss to explain why David Watkins, one of the most senior officials in the NIO, claimed that at a meeting of security officials and police, the Chief Constable had described Rosemary as "an immoral woman" - a "very strange recollection" according to Ronnie.

Apparently the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers and his assistant suffered a similar memory lapse when they alleged that the Chief Constable claimed in a meeting that some solicitors were working to a paramilitary agenda. Not so, according to the evidence given by Sir Ronnie. If this was said it might have been when he left the meeting to take a phone call and the phrase might have been uttered by the Assistant Chief Constable. However, Sir Ronnie did not talk to him about that afterwards.

CAJ were always concerned at the failure of Special Branch to share intelligence. From the evidence so far, it seems that they did not even share it amongst themselves!

**Paul Magaen**

# Civil Liberties Diary

## 9<sup>th</sup> January

Prisoner Ombudsman Pauline McCabe publishes a damning report into the prison authorities' failure to prevent the death of Colin Bell. Among the most serious failings to be identified is CCTV footage of staff asleep on make shift beds, at key points when they should have been on duty.

Former Special Branch informer Mark Haddock is charged with the murder of Tommy English in 2000. This follows investigations by the PSNI's Historical Enquiries Team.

NI Secretary of State Shaun Woodward is asked to investigate why senior counsel to the Billy Wright Inquiry quit last year. At the time Derek Bachelor QC had claimed he was removed from his post though Chairman Lord MacLean said he resigned after 60 days of hearing.

## 12<sup>th</sup> January

Polish family flee their Ballymena home after being attacked by a group of up to 20 people. PSNI spokesman says that it is being investigated as a hate crime.

## 15<sup>th</sup> January

Figures released by the Equality Commission detail 103 cases where money was paid to claimants. Around a third of those cases were taken on grounds of disability discrimination. During this period almost 3000 inquiries were received by the Commission.

Former Special Branch informer and UVF member Mark Haddock fails in his bid to stop The Irish News, BBC and UTV from reporting on any reengagement in crime after his release from prison. Costs were also awarded against Haddock.

## 16<sup>th</sup> January

Former Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan apologises to the family of Mary Travers, a school teacher,

murdered by the IRA in 1981. She admitted that a report into her murder contained factual inaccuracies. The report, which criticised the allegations made by Ms. Travers father, has been withdrawn.

The relatives of Robert Hamill revisit the scene of his murder in Portadown. The visit was designed to aid the ongoing probe into his murder by a loyalist and show the police positions at the time.

## 19<sup>th</sup> January

Former RUC Chief Constable Sir Ronnie Flanagan appears at the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry in Belfast.

## 21<sup>st</sup> January

The Stormont committee which examined the issues around the transfer of security responsibilities from Westminster warns the Executive that inadequate funding could undermine the successful devolution of policing and justice powers.

## 22<sup>nd</sup> January

On his third and final day of evidence Ronnie Flanagan tells the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry that police knew the identity of those who killed the solicitor shortly after her death but did not have advance intelligence which could have saved her life.

An official report into claims that intelligence agents tracked the Omagh bombers on the day of the attack is published. Sir Peter Gibson said there was no evidence that GCHQ intercepted information that could have prevented the atrocity and then failed to pass it on to police.

## 26<sup>th</sup> January

Minister for the Environment in the Executive Sammy Wilson tells firms to employ "locals" ahead of migrant workers as the recession bites. His comments are condemned as dangerous and illegal under EC legislation.

## 28<sup>th</sup> January

The Eames/Bradley report on dealing with the past is published. The report into how the legacy of the Troubles should be dealt with makes many recommendations including compensation to victims of the Troubles, a repatriation programme for those exiled and the establishment of a review and investigation unit to examine murders from that period.

Speaking at the NI Children's Law Centre President Mary McAleese calls for children's rights to be further enforced in society.

## 30<sup>th</sup> January

The family of Nora McCabe launch a legal challenge against the decision by the DPP not to charge anyone with her murder or for perjury at her inquest. Counsel for the family alleges that police officers may have plotted to cover up the true facts of her death. Barry Macdonald QC tells the court the officer who fired the fatal round may have intended to seriously or fatally wound her.

Irish News reports that retired Canadian judge Peter Cory is favourite to take on the Chairman's role in the proposed new legacy commission to carry out a five year investigation of Troubles related killings.

*Compiled by Mark Bassett from various newspaper*

## Just News

Just News welcomes readers' news, views and comments.

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