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**Robert Hamill**

THURSDAY  
20/03/2008  
15:51:45

**Hamill death enquiry terms won't be widened.**

The Northern Ireland Office has refused to extend the terms of reference for the inquiry into the death of Robert Hamill, it has been revealed.

Secretary of State Shaun Woodward turned down the family's request to widen the scope of the investigation to include the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Nobody has ever been convicted of the murder in April 1997 when father-of-two Mr Hamill, 25, a Catholic, was kicked to death by loyalists in the centre of Portadown, County Armagh.

RUC officers in a nearby Land Rover allegedly failed to intervene.

Lawyers for the family wanted to question DPP staff. But 18 months after submitting their request Mr Woodward rejected it after taking detailed independent legal advice by David Perry QC.

There was he said, no justifiable grounds to extend the terms of reference.

The Hamill family was deeply disappointed by the decision, according to their solicitor Bara McGrory who said it was surprising in view of the fact that the inquiry itself made a similar request.

Even though the first of the oral evidence has yet to start, the inquiry has already cost 13 million pounds and today's decision is almost certain to delay it even further.

Mr Woodward said he made the decision after careful and detailed

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consideration. He added: "In doing so, I was not conducting a review of prosecutorial decisions myself, I was considering whether there was an issue that needed to be looked at by a public inquiry."

A spokesperson for the inquiry said: "We are considering the decision and may comment on it in due course."

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