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## Politics

### QC denies freezing widow out of NIO inquiry

Thursday, May 24, 2007

By Chris Thornton

The QC looking into a possible NIO cover up has been accused of freezing out the widow whose court action first exposed the suspect behaviour.

Lawyers for west Belfast woman Brenda Downes argued in the High Court that they should be given access to the material held by Peter Scott QC, who is investigating whether the NIO misled the court.

After hearing arguments yesterday, Mr Justice Gillen will decide today whether there should be a full judicial review of Mr Scott's refusal to give her access.






The Attorney General brought in Mr Scott last year to review the NIO's handling of the Victims' Commissioner case.

Mrs Downes successfully challenged the appointment of Bertha McDougall, and Lord Justice Girvan found that the NIO had relied on "obviously misleading" information to hide the DUP's role in the appointment.

Because Lord Justice Girvan said Mrs Downes would have a natural interest in the conduct of the inquiry, her lawyers asked Mr Scott for access to material gathered by his review.

But he refused, saying he was conducting a "private, ad hoc review" for the Attorney General.

Before Mr Justice Gillen yesterday, her lawyer said Mr Scott was treating her "no different from any member of the public", when she was wronged by the NIO's actions.

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