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## Finucane inquiry secretly blocked

**EXCLUSIVE**

By Barry McCaffrey

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The public inquiry into solicitor Pat Finucane's murder has been secretly blocked for nearly two years.

Last night his family expressed anger at the revelation, saying they never believed the British government had any real intention of



opening a proper inquiry.

His widow Geraldine Finucane received a letter from the NIO earlier this month which disclosed that in 2006 the then secretary of state, Peter Hain, decided to halt preparations for an inquiry.

In April 2004 retired Canadian judge Peter Cory recommended a public inquiry into claims of security-force collusion in the 1989 murder of Mr Finucane, pictured.

However, following his recommendation special legislation was rushed through parliament allowing government ministers to block evidence from an inquiry.

The Finucane family's opposition to the Inquiries Act was supported by Judge Cory and some of Britain's leading judges including Bloody Sunday Tribunal chairman Lord Saville.

Inquiry - Pat Finucane probe secretly blocked

Last year the Dail passed a unanimous motion calling on the British government to allow a proper independent inquiry.

But in a letter to Mrs Finucane dated April 7 Secretary of State Shaun Woodward's principal private secretary Simon Marsh re-vealed Mr Hain's decision that "in the light of the Finucane family's continuing opposition it was no longer justifiable to continue to devote public money to preparations for an inquiry which the family would refuse to accept under the terms of the Inquiries Act".

"Therefore the restriction notice has not been completed," it read.

Mrs Finucane said: "We were not informed of this decision at the time.

"The letter stated that the decision was taken because my family refused to accept ministerial control of an inquiry under the notorious Inquiries Act 2005.

"They appear to be saying that, unless we agree that British government ministers should be all-owed to control what information the inquiry is permitted to examine in public, there will be no inquiry at all."

Mrs Finucane criticised Mr Woodward and Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

"I have long doubted whether the British government had any real intention of ever establishing a genuinely independent public inquiry into Pat's murder. This letter confirms my worst suspicions," she said.


"They have misled my family, the Irish government and they have misled the European Court of Human Rights."

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