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Last Updated: 11/04/2008 15:58

Hamill case to go ahead in June

A legal challenge by the family of a man murdered in Portadown, Co Armagh after alleged security force inaction will go ahead in June.

Relatives of Robert Hamill (25) won a judicial review of the Northern Ireland Secretary's decision to limit the terms of reference of a inquiry into his death.



Robert Hamill

Nobody has been convicted of the April 1997 murder when the Catholic father-of-two was kicked to death by loyalists in the centre of Portadown, where police in a nearby Land Rover allegedly failed to intervene.

A spokeswoman for the inquiry team said: "The judicial review will take place from June 9th-11th and the judgment is expected very soon afterwards."

Last month, Northern Ireland Secretary Shaun Woodward refused the family's request to widen the investigation to include the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). Lawyers wanted to question DPP staff. But 18 months after submitting their request Mr Woodward rejected it after taking detailed legal advice by David Perry QC.

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

Family barristers were in Belfast's High Court today for their successful bid for a review of that decision. Even though the first of the oral evidence has yet to start, the inquiry has already cost £13m.

Full hearings will not begin before September. The opening was almost three years ago. There are 230 statements on the files, including those of eye-witnesses, civilians and retired and serving police officers working for the Royal Ulster Constabulary at the time.

PA

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