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Last Updated: Tuesday, October 21, 2008, 16:47

## Pressure increases for Finucane inquiry

Britain is coming under continuing US pressure to grant a fully independent inquiry into the murder of a prominent Northern Ireland lawyer, his family claimed today.

Security force collusion in the 1989 murder of solicitor Pat Finucane will be raised by his youngest son John at a high profile human rights event in the US this week.

The organisation Human Rights First will celebrate its 30th anniversary at a gala dinner in New York on Thursday where Hollywood star Sigourney Weaver will introduce the 28-year-old Mr Finucane as a guest speaker.

Pat Finucane was shot dead in his Belfast home in front of his wife and children by loyalist gunmen in February 1989, but security force collusion in the killing has fuelled long-standing calls for a public inquiry to establish the full truth.

"It is an honour to be invited by Human Rights First to celebrate 30 years of their work in defending and promoting human rights worldwide," said John Finucane.

"My family knows only too well how important the support of such a distinguished international organisation can be in the pursuit of justice."

The British government already asked retired Canadian judge Peter Cory to review the case along with other controversial killings and he recommend a public inquiry into the Finucane case.

But the Finucane family has rejected plans to hold an inquiry under new legislation that relatives insist would allow government ministers to frustrate the search for truth.

John Finucane, who himself qualified as a solicitor this year, said his invitation to tell the star-studded event about his family's campaign was confirmation of the continuing US interest in the case.

Human Rights First has worked internationally and has compiled reports on events in Northern Ireland.

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The group has also reported on claims that security forces helped kill Mr Finucane because he represented republican suspects in court cases at the height of the Troubles.

Thursday's celebration will see the organisation pay special tribute to Senator Edward Kennedy for his lifetime contribution to human rights.

The event comes after presidential candidate Barack Obama backed the Finucane family's calls for a full inquiry.

Mr Finucane said: "Human Rights First has undertaken several investigations into human rights abuses in Northern Ireland since their first visit in 1992.

Human Rights First has provided invaluable support and assistance to the victims of human rights abuses in Northern Ireland for over 15 years.

"Human Rights First has consistently backed my family's call on the British government to establish a fully independent, international public inquiry, initial concerns having been raised in their first report, Human Rights and Legal Defence, published in 1993.

"Since then, Human Rights First has endorsed fully the recommendations of Judge Peter Cory and has heavily criticised the restrictive provisions of the Inquiries Act 2005."

He welcomed his invitation to the US event and said: "Coming so soon after Senator Obama's recent endorsement of my family's position, it is encouraging to note that the US political arena and international human rights community continue to realise that an independent inquiry is an urgent necessity. Britain must face up to its involvement in and responsibility for the conflict in Ireland."

PA

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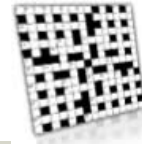
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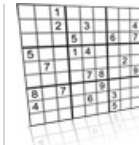
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