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Last Updated: 24/04/2008 17:30

## Ahern backs call for Finucane inquiry

Taoiseach Bertie Ahern today met the family of murdered solicitor Pat Finucane and reiterated the Government's support for a public inquiry into the killing.

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) told the Finucane family that preparations for an independent inquiry into the murder in 1989 have ceased, *The Irish Times* reports today.

Mr Ahern met Mr Finucane's widow Geraldine at Government Buildings.

"Geraldine and the Finucane family have travelled a long and difficult road in their search for the truth," he said.

"I reiterated the Government's continuing support for a public inquiry into Pat's murder. That position has full all-party support in Dáil Éireann."

The NIO cited the family's opposition to the terms for the proposed inquiry as the obstacle. The family said it doubts if an inquiry will ever be held.

A letter addressed to Geraldine Finucane's solicitors and signed by Northern Secretary Shaun Woodward's principal private secretary earlier this month made clear that that preparatory work was stopped last year.

According to the NIO, this was because the family would not co-operate with the holding of an inquiry under the controversial Inquiries Act, which empowers the British government to withhold information and any findings from the public domain on grounds of national security.

Mrs Finucane, whose husband was shot dead in February 1989 by loyalists acting in collusion with British state agencies, has pressed for an inquiry to be held under existing less restrictive legislation. She argues that a tribunal under the Inquiries Act would not be sufficiently independent of government.

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