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RUC did not investigate Rosemary Nelson death threats 'properly'

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Sinn Féin Policing Board member Daithí McKay has said that today's Police Ombudsman's report into the handling of Loyalist death threats against the murdered Human Rights Lawyer Rosemary Nelson highlight failures by both the RUC and NIO to take the threats seriously or act to protect her life and called for the British Government to lift restrictions on the present Nelson Inquiry as called for by Judge Cory.

Mr McKay said:

"This report makes it clear that the RUC did not handle the investigation into Loyalist death threats against the murdered Human Rights lawyer Rosemary Nelson 'properly'. They also turned a blind eye to threats made by RUC personnel against Mrs Nelson

"Rosemary Nelson was killed by Loyalists in 1999 after years of death threats made by Loyalists and RUC personnel. She was a well respected Human Rights lawyer who stood up for the rights of local people yet these serious threats were not dealt with seriously by either the RUC or NIO.

"There is a widely held belief that British State agents were directly involved in Rosemary Nelson's murder. This belief has been strengthened over the years as successive RUC and PSNI regimes have sought to frustrate and delay the search for the truth.

"The Police Ombudsman's report clearly highlights why there should be a full independent inquiry into Rosemary Nelson's murder the British Government should now lift restrictions on the present Nelson Inquiry as called for by Judge Cory and allow the truth to come out." ENDS

Note to Editors

In her Report today Ms Nuala O'Loan highlighted key issues including:

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That the RUC's assessment of Mrs Nelson's situation, and its subsequent actions, were inadequate. She said police should have made more strenuous efforts to establish a clearer picture of the level of risk and threat to Mrs Nelson, particularly given her profile at the time.

Ms O'Loan said:

"They did not acknowledge the existence of the previous death threats, including two threats which were said to have come from police officers. Nor did they acknowledge a previous assessment in which Special Branch believed Mrs Nelson was at a 'degree of risk'."

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