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## Ex-UN rapporteur regrets 'not saving Nelson's life'

By Barry McCaffrey

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A leading human rights lawyer from the United Nations has expressed deep regret that he had been unable to save the life of solicitor Rosemary Nelson.

Former UN special rapporteur Dr Param Cumaraswamy was giving



testimony yesterday at the public inquiry into the events

surrounding the murder of the mother-of-three, who was killed when a bomb exploded under her car in Lurgan in March 1999.

In 1997 Dr Cumaraswamy visited Northern Ireland to investigate allegations that up to 30 solicitors had been threatened or harassed by RUC officers.

One of the most high-profile cases involved a series of alleged threats against Mrs Nelson (40), who represented nationalist residents on Portadown's Garvaghy Road and was involved in a number of other high-profile cases.

Dr Cumaraswamy was so concerned that he wrote to the British government calling on it to ensure her safety.

EVIDENCE: Former UN rapporteur Param

In 1998 the special rapporteur concluded that a number of RUC officers had been involved in "activities which

Cumaraswamy leaves the Rosemary Nelson

constitute intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference" with lawyers.

personal regret over the deaths of Pat

Recalling how he met Mrs Nelson for the last time in Washington DC, six months before she was killed, he

Finucane and Rosemary Nelson MAIN

said: "I felt that Rosemary Nelson was troubled by her safety and I noted that her case always reminded me of

Pat Finucane's situation."

Pat Finucane's situation."

Expressing regret that more had not been done to protect Mrs Nelson's life, Dr Cumaraswamy said: "Her

murder caused me a great deal of

concern.

"It was the greatest regret of my nine years as a special rapporteur that I couldn't save her in the plight that she

was in.

"So much was done by all concerned but we couldn't save her."

Expressing his personal regret over the deaths of Pat Finucane and Rosemary Nelson, the UN human rights

lawyer said: "It is a big regret that two lawyers lost their lives for no other reason than they defended their

clients effectively.


"I hope that their deaths were not in vain and that valuable lessons have been learned."

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