



News Release

Thursday 14th March 2019

Bloody Sunday prosecution decisions

The PPS has today issued decisions as to prosecution in relation to 19 individuals reported for a range of potential offences including murder, attempted murder and wounding committed on 30 January, 1972.

The Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland, Stephen Herron, together with members of the prosecution team led by the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, Michael Agnew, made the announcement to families of the deceased and those injured on Bloody Sunday at a private meeting this morning (Thursday 14 March, 2019).

The Director said: "An experienced team of senior prosecutors assisted by Senior Counsel has given careful consideration to all of the available evidence in these cases and applied the Test for Prosecution, in line with the PPS Code for Prosecutors.

"It has been concluded that there is sufficient available evidence to prosecute one former soldier, Soldier F, for the murder of James Wray and William McKinney; and for the attempted murders of Joseph Friel, Michael Quinn, Joe Mahon and Patrick O'Donnell.

"In respect of the other 18 suspects, including 16 former soldiers and two alleged Official IRA members, it has been concluded that the available evidence is insufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction. In these circumstances the evidential Test for Prosecution is not met."

The decisions announced today relate only to allegations of criminal conduct on Bloody Sunday itself. Consideration will now be given to allegations of perjury in respect of those suspects reported by police.

Reflecting on his meeting with the families the Director added: "I am mindful that it has been a long road for the families to reach this point and today will be another extremely difficult day for many of them. We wanted to meet with them personally to explain the prosecution decisions taken and to help them understand the reasons. We have spent time with them this morning, given them detailed information and we are committed to further engagement over the coming period.

"There has been a level of expectation around the prosecution decisions in light of the findings of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry. However, much of the material which was

available for consideration by the Inquiry is not admissible in criminal proceedings, due to strict rules of evidence that apply.

“I wish to clearly state that where a decision has been reached not to prosecute, that this is in no way diminishes any finding by the Bloody Sunday Inquiry that those killed or injured were not posing a threat to any of the soldiers.

“We recognise the deep disappointment felt by many of those we met with today. As prosecutors we are required to be wholly objective in our approach. However, that does not mean that we do not have compassion for all those who are affected by our decisions. Our role is to independently assess the available evidence and apply the Test for Prosecution. We are making a summary of the reasons for our decisions available today to provide assurance to the public that our statutory responsibility was undertaken in this case with absolute integrity and impartiality, without fear or favour.”

The decisions today were relayed to all of those reported to the PPS by police in advance of the public announcement.

[ENDS](#)

Note to Editors:

1. A full statement of decisions has been provided to all family members and will be published [on the PPS website](#) after 11am on Thursday, 14th March
2. Many of those involved in the Bloody Sunday Inquiry were granted anonymity in the course of those proceedings, and were then referred to by a cipher (a letter, a number or combination of both). This includes all of the former soldiers who were reported to the PPS as suspects. The PPS considers that these reporting restrictions remain in place and that there should be no publication by any person either of the name of that individual or of any information that may, whether directly or indirectly lead to his or her identification.
3. As a prosecution will shortly be commenced, the PPS does not wish to say anything that might prejudice those proceedings and will not be making any further comment on this aspect of the case. The PPS would ask that there is no reporting, commentary or sharing of information on-line from other parties which could in any way prejudice these proceedings.
4. Twenty suspects were reported to the PPS by the PSNI in relation to the events on the ground on Bloody Sunday. This included 18 soldiers, one of whom has since died, and two Official IRA suspects. The first file from police was received in November 2016, with further files submitted in 2017.

5. All decisions by the PPS are taken strictly in accordance with the Test for Prosecution which involves two stages. The Test for Prosecution is met if, in relation to an identifiable suspect, the available evidence is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of a conviction (the Evidential Test) and if prosecution is in the public interest (the Public Interest Test). The Evidential Test must be passed first before the Public Interest Test is considered. Further information can be found in the [PPS Code for Prosecutors](#).