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STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF JOHN LECKEY

DATED THIS 29<sup>th</sup> DAY OF February 2008

I, JOHN LECKEY, declare that this statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that if it is tendered in evidence at the Inquiry I will be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

1. The Inquiry has disclosed a number of documents to me. Where I make specific reference to a document in my statement I have given the number of the relevant page.
2. In April 1997, I was the Coroner for Greater Belfast. I had held this position since 1992. Under the coroner's legislation in force in Northern Ireland, with the exception of prison deaths, all inquests are discretionary rather than mandatory.
3. According to the Police Report Concerning Death at page 00398, Robert Hamill died on 8 May 1997. The case was not directly referred to me. Although today there is a single coroner's district in Northern Ireland, at that time there were a number of coroners' districts. People seriously injured at an incident elsewhere in Northern Ireland were often brought to the specialist units at the major hospitals in Belfast. However, where such a patient died and an inquest was to be held, for the convenience of witnesses, the practice was to ask the coroner for the district where the incident occurred if he or she would be willing to hold the inquest. The incident leading to the death of Robert Hamill occurred in the coroner's district of Armagh and Craigavon, the coroner for which was Mr [REDACTED]. A member of my staff therefore asked Mr [REDACTED] probably by telephone, if he would be willing to take the case on. However, Mr [REDACTED] wrote to me on 18 September 1998 to return the papers intimating that, "there