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NORTHERN IRELAND
**COURT
SERVICE**

ROBERT HAMILL, DECEASED

The Coroner for Greater Belfast, Mr J L Leckey, has decided not to hold an inquest into the death of Robert Hamill who died in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast on 8 May 1997 from severe head injuries sustained when he was assaulted in Portadown in the early hours of Sunday 27 April 1997.

The circumstances surrounding Mr Hamill's death are profoundly disturbing and, but for the consideration mentioned below, would undoubtedly require that an inquest should be held. However, after much anxious consideration, and with great regret, the Coroner has concluded in this instance that an inquest should not be held.

He has reached this conclusion solely because of his concerns for the safety of certain witnesses. He is satisfied that their lives would be placed in danger if their evidence were to be given at, or placed in documentary form before an inquest. Because of these concerns he has come to the reluctant conclusion that their evidence could not be introduced at an inquest.

The Coroner believes that if an inquest were to be held without the evidence of these witnesses a seriously incomplete account of the circumstances of Mr Hamill's death would be given, which would not add materially to the evidence already in the public domain following the trial of Paul Rodney Marc Hobson. Accordingly, in these circumstances, he

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has concluded that no useful public purpose would be served by holding an inquest. The same view has been expressed to the Coroner by the solicitor acting for Mr Hamill's next of kin.

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If you have any further queries in this or other court related matters please contact :

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