



HER MAJESTY'S CORONER

DISTRICT OF GREATER BELFAST

John L Leckey LL.M.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Your ref: [REDACTED]

15th May 2000

Dear [REDACTED]

ROBERT HAMILL, DECEASED

Thank you for your letter of 26 April.

You seek to persuade me that, if an inquest is to be held, I should introduce into evidence the statements given by the two witnesses to whom you refer.

I have already informed you that these witnesses believe that giving evidence in court would seriously threaten their personal safety, and that even if they were screened when giving evidence and/or were referred to by code-letters, these fears would remain. The nature of the evidence they are able to give is capable of identifying them even with these safeguards. I told you that I had been advised that these considerations resulted in the witnesses refusing to give evidence in a proposed prosecution by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

I also informed you that I had spoken personally to the witnesses and to the police officer in charge of the investigation and that I was satisfied that the witnesses' fears and concerns were genuine. You say in your letter that you understand my concerns. Perhaps I should have made it clear that I was (and remain) equally satisfied that even if their statements were to be introduced in evidence under Rule 17 the fears and concerns for the personal safety of these two witnesses would be exactly the same. I had in fact personally discussed this option with the witnesses and with the investigating