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**STATEMENT BY THE LORD ADVOCATE, COLIN BOYD QC**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

I share the Deputy First Minister's concern at the Implications of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary's interim report. The prosecution service for which I am responsible must be able to rely on and have confidence in fingerprint evidence which is presented to us by the police.

I have instructed that in all current and future cases where fingerprint evidence provided by SCRO is submitted to the Procurator Fiscal an independent external check of this evidence will be carried out (either by another fingerprint bureau or an independent expert), prior to trial.

In light of recent public concern I asked officials to check how many outstanding appeals are based on allegations of fingerprint mis-identification. No such cases were found. In the case of David Asbury who was convicted of murder at Glasgow High Court on 3 June 1997 and at which Shirley McKie was called as a witness, an appeal against conviction is pending but no appeal ground has been lodged challenging the fingerprint evidence. Nevertheless I instructed that independent experts examine the fingerprint evidence which was led at this trial. Arrangements were made recently to have the productions re-examined to check the fingerprint identifications which were made by SCRO in that case and this identification will take place as soon as possible and the results will be communicated to Mr Asbury's solicitors.

I look forward to seeing the full report from HMCIC as soon as it is published and consider what further action is appropriate.

Press Office  
Crown Office  
June 22, 2000