

17 September 2008

Date announced for initial Fingerprint Inquiry Hearing

An Initial Hearing of the independent public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the Shirley McKie case will take place on Monday 20 October 2008 and will be chaired by Sir Anthony Campbell.

The Fingerprint Inquiry will look at the steps which were taken to identify and verify the fingerprints associated with the case of *HM Advocate v McKie* in 1999. The Inquiry will determine the consequences of steps taken, report on findings of fact and make recommendations.

Sir Anthony, who retired as a Lord Justice of Appeal in Northern Ireland at the end of August, has appointed Gerry Moynihan QC and Ailsa Carmichael as counsel to the Inquiry and Ann Nelson as solicitor and secretary.

The Inquiry is beginning the process of gathering evidence and identifying potential witnesses.

The Chairman of an Inquiry may designate persons or organisations to be core participants in the Inquiry. Sir Anthony is calling for those who wish to be considered as a core participant to apply to the Inquiry team using the form available on the Inquiry website - www.thefingerprintinquiryscotland.org.uk. The website includes the Inquiry's contact details and the deadline for applications is Friday 3 October at 12:00 noon.

Commenting on the Inquiry, Sir Anthony said:

“In looking at the issues afresh I shall endeavour to make known all the facts and I hope that by doing so it will prove possible for the matter to be regarded as having been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. I hope that anyone who believes that they can assist me in this task will come forward.”

Notes to Editors

1. The Fingerprint Inquiry is a public inquiry set up under the Inquiries Act 2005.
2. The Inquiry's terms of reference are:

To inquire into the steps that were taken to identify and verify the fingerprints associated with, and leading up to, the case of *HM Advocate v. McKie* in 1999.

To determine, in relation to the fingerprint designated Y7, the consequences of the steps taken or not taken.

To report findings of fact and make recommendations as to what measures might now be introduced, beyond those that have already been introduced since 1999, to ensure that any shortcomings are avoided in the future.

3. The hearing on Monday 20 October will be open to the public. The venue and arrangements for media attendance will be announced in due course on the Inquiry website.
4. The website provides background information on the Inquiry, biographies of the Inquiry team, documents relating to the Inquiry, and frequently asked questions. It will be updated regularly.
5. A public notice calling for applications from potential core participants will be published in the national press in Scotland on Thursday 18 September.
6. Core participants will be actively involved in the Inquiry and its hearings either representing themselves or through legal representatives. Legal work can be publicly funded in some circumstances, but only once approved by the Chairman. For more information visit:
www.thefingerprintinquiryscotland.org.uk
7. Sir Anthony Campbell was one of the most senior judges in Northern Ireland. He retired on 31 August 2008. He was educated at Campbell College, Belfast and Queens' College, Cambridge; called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in 1960 and to the Bar of England and Wales by Gray's Inn in the same year. From 1971 he was Junior Counsel to the Attorney General for NI until 1974 when he took Silk and he was Senior Crown Counsel in NI from 1984-1988. He was a judge of the High Court from 1988-1998 when he was appointed a Lord Justice of Appeal. He was appointed a Privy Councillor in 1999.

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