

KRW LAW LLP

21 July 2022

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE FAMILY OF ANN HAMILTON
THE GUILDFORD PUB BOMBINGS INQUEST 2022**

Following the conclusion of the Birmingham Pub Bombings 1974 Inquest we applied to the Senior Coroner for Surrey to have the original inquest into the Guildford Pub Bombings 1974 resumed. We successfully achieved this and that inquest concluded today.

Our sister Ann Hamilton, a private in the British Army WRAC, was murdered in the Guildford Pub Bombings 1974 together with four others, three soldiers and a civilian. Ann was 19.

We welcomed the decision to resume the original inquest which had been suspended following the arrest and conviction of the Guildford Four.

We were anxious to be able to effectively participate in the inquest by way of assisting the Senior Coroner through independent legal representation in the same way as the relatives of the bereaved in the Birmingham pub bombings were eventually able to do so.

Despite the public support of the Senior Coroner and Counsel for the Surrey Police that opportunity was denied to us. We applied for legal aid. This was refused by the Legal Aid Agency. The refusal was based on an assessment that our effective participation was not in the wider interest and that the Senior Coroner had ruled that Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights was not engaged. Article 2 protects the right life and when that right has been violated there are enhanced investigatory obligations including issues of preventability and foreseeability.

We then requested help from the Veterans Minister and the Ministry of Defence. We were told that funding for inquests was a matter for the Legal Aid Agency.

In a catch-22 situation we were not able to argue that Article 2 should be engaged. Neither were we able to argue that the Senior Coroner should hear the inquest with a jury. Lawyers acting on our behalf *pro bono* did as much as they could, and our family wrote to the Senior Coroner outlining our concerns regarding the scope of the inquest.

In the event no family members of the victims were legally represented at this inquest. We have not been able to attend because we live in the North of England, and we work full time and have families. We have not been able to examine witnesses or interrogate the extensive material that was disclosed to the Interested Persons.

The Senior Coroner was assisted by a legal team of one QC and two junior counsel. The Surrey Police were assisted by a QC. The London Metropolitan Police and the Ministry of Defence were represented by junior counsel.

We shall make applications under the Freedom of Information Act to have published the costs of this inquest including the fees of Counsel which are paid for out of public funds.

There have been 10 pre-inquest review hearings since 2019. There have been 15 days of hearings generating a transcript of approximately 100 pages a day. There have been 32 called witnesses and additional witness evidence in written form including expert testimony. In only four of these hearings has our family been represented *pro bono*.

We know that Ann was unlawfully killed by a bomb planted by the Provisional IRA during an intensive incendiary campaign being conducted on targets in England.

We know there are serious questions to be asked around all the circumstances into how our sister and the others were murdered and who was responsible.

This was our last chance to engage in a process to produce truth, justice and accountability but we have been excluded from that process and our voice, on behalf of Ann, was not heard, and our presence in this was process was absent.

An inquest must serve to allay suspicion and rumour. An inquest must serve the interests of the relatives of victims. We do not think this inquest has served either of these purposes. First, the families were excluded because there was no public funding. Second, the inquest was circumscribed in its scope because of the current state of coronial law and rules. Both must be addressed if this process is to continue with any credibility in the interests of bereaved families. Many of our questions remain unanswered. **ENDS**

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