

UK Government publishes Terms of Reference for Patrick Finucane Inquiry

9.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Hilary Benn MP, has today [09 March] announced the Terms of Reference for the Patrick Finucane Inquiry

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Hilary Benn MP, has today announced the Terms of Reference for the Patrick Finucane Inquiry, following agreement with the Chair of the Inquiry, Sir Gary Hickinbottom.

In 2024, the Secretary of State announced the government's intention to establish an independent Inquiry into the circumstances of Mr Finucane's death. The human rights lawyer was brutally murdered in his North Belfast home by the loyalist paramilitary group, the Ulster Defence Association, in February 1989.

The Terms of Reference were published by the Secretary of State via a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament.

Mr Benn said:

The Terms of Reference have been developed following formal consultation with Sir Gary Hickinbottom, as required by the Inquiries Act. Sir Gary, in turn, consulted the family of Patrick Finucane who provided very helpful feedback and observations. I would like to thank Sir Gary and the Finucane family for their engagement throughout the process.

I commend and support the tireless campaign of Mrs Finucane and her family in seeking answers to the brutal murder of their loved one over the course of 37 years and I am pleased that the Inquiry will now finally be able to get underway.

The Inquiry will be established under the Inquiries Act 2005, with full powers, including the power to compel the production of documents and to summon witnesses to give evidence on oath.

Last year, the Secretary of State announced Sir Gary Hickinbottom as Chair of the inquiry. Mr Benn also confirmed the appointment of both Baroness Nuala O'Loan, and Francesca Del Mese, as Assessors to the Inquiry. Both will provide advice to the Chair on their relevant expertise in regards to the Inquiry, while also giving further assurance about the Inquiry's independence.

Note to Editors:

The Full Written Ministerial Statement regarding the Terms of Reference for the Patrick Finucane Inquiry can be found here.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-government-publishes-terms-of-reference-for-patrick-finucane-inquiry>