



NEWS RELEASE

PPS confirms no further prosecutions in relation to the abduction and murder of Jean McConville

The PPS today (Tuesday 29th September) has confirmed that, following a careful consideration of all the available evidence, a decision has been taken not to prosecute seven individuals who were reported to the PPS by the PSNI in relation to the abduction and murder of Jean McConville.

Outlining the decision today, Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, Pamela Atchison, said: "We have given careful consideration to the evidence currently available in respect of each of the three men and four women reported and have concluded that it is insufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of obtaining a conviction against any of them for a criminal offence."

The evidence against the seven individuals arose from a number of different sources and included, in respect of some of those individuals, hearsay evidence provided by the American authorities from the Boston College Belfast Project. In considering the evidence, PPS addressed a range of offences directly and indirectly connected with the murder of Jean McConville.

There has already been a decision to prosecute an eighth individual, Ivor Bell, who was arrested and charged in March 2014 and is currently before the court. The decision is to prosecute Ivor Bell on charges of soliciting the murder of Jean McConville.

Ms Atchison added: "We have had a series of meetings with members of the family, most recently this morning, about all of our prosecutorial decisions and we will continue to engage with them as we progress the prosecution of Ivor Bell. We thank them for the positive way that they have engaged with us at each stage of the process."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

*Jean McConville was a widowed mother-of ten who was abducted from her home in the Divis flats area of west Belfast in December 1972, before she was murdered and secretly buried in the Republic of Ireland.

*The Public Prosecution Service received files on eight people in relation to the police investigation into the abduction and murder of Mrs McConville.

*One of those arrested, 78-year-old Ivor Malachy Bell, was charged in connection with the Jean McConville case and is currently awaiting trial.

* The remaining seven are three men aged 57, 59 and 66 - and four women aged 58, 59, 59 and 61.

*Evidence considered by prosecutors in a number of these files included material gathered for the Boston College Belfast Project.

Notes for guidance:

The Boston Tapes:

The Public Prosecution Service, in co-operation with the PSNI, began a formal judicial process through the US courts in February 2011 to gain access to material gathered for the Boston College Belfast Project relating to the murder of Mrs Jean McConville. Material in respect of the murder - from the contributions of 11 individuals who were interviewed as part of the Belfast Project - was released by Boston College, on the order of a US court, in September 2013.

What is the Test for Prosecution?

In every case considered, the PPS takes a decision by applying what is known as the Test for Prosecution. The prosecutor must decide whether there is sufficient evidence to put a person on trial.

The Test for Prosecution has two elements. It involves an assessment as to whether the available evidence provides a reasonable prospect of conviction - and, if it does, whether prosecution is in the public interest.

For further information please call PPS Communications on **02890897187** or out of hours officer on **07790 031568**. Email: ppspressoffice@ppsni.gov.uk