

UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

Statement from Sir John Mitting, Chair of the Undercover Policing Inquiry

In the strategic review published in May last year the Inquiry set out an intended timetable which provided that evidence hearings would start in June 2019. For a number of reasons it will not be possible to start and complete Tranche 1 in June and July 2019. The start of hearings will therefore be postponed.

The principal causes of the need for postponement are:

1. The time which it has taken to obtain intelligence reports filed in 1968 – 1984 from those who hold them. The number of documents is large (approximately 25,000 pages). The manner in which they have been archived has created some problems. Retrieval has been a time-consuming and labour-intensive task, both for Inquiry staff and for those who hold the documents. The Inquiry is grateful to them for their efforts. The process is nearly, but not quite complete.
2. The time which it is taking to identify the authors of each intelligence report, so as to permit an investigation file to be created about his or her deployment.
3. The time required to collate investigation files and prepare rule 9 requests for witness statements. This part of the process is taking longer than anticipated, because of the need to fill in residual gaps in the documents so far obtained and the difficulty, in some cases, of attributing a set of intelligence reports to an individual officer. In consequence, the number of rule 9 requests made to date has fallen short of that anticipated.
4. The need to afford adequate time to non-state core participants to consider the documentary material which will be supplied to them and for them to respond to rule 9 requests for witness statements. Given the large number of documents which will be supplied to them they may need more time than had originally been envisaged.

A revised timetable will be published when the effect of these factors has been determined. It is unlikely that evidential hearings can begin before 2020.

Postponement of the start date is regrettable, but is necessary if the Inquiry is to fulfil its two principal objectives: to get to the truth about the past and make worthwhile recommendations for the future.

**Sir John Mitting,
Chair of the Undercover Policing Inquiry**

29 January 2019