**No charge in Martin O’Hagan murder case**

THE NORTHERN Ireland Director of Public Prosecutions announced in January that it has decided not to prosecute in the case of Martin O’Hagan – the Sunday World reporter murdered in Lurgan in 2001. O’Hagan was Secretary of NUJ Belfast and District Branch, and is believed to be the only journalist murdered in Northern Ireland.

The case was based on evidence supplied by Neil Hyde, convicted in 2012 for numerous Loyalist Volunteer Force offences, who agreed to help police in exchange for a reduced sentence. The prosecutor decided that, “in the absence of any corroboration, the available evidence is insufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of obtaining a conviction against any individual”.

Sunday World northern editor Jim McDowell expressed anger at the decision. NUJ Irish Secretary Seamus Dooley said the union “does not accept that the State can walk away from this case. The murder... was an outrageous act of violence which cannot go unpunished.”

Recent months have seen an upsurge in attacks against journalists in Northern Ireland, with one photographer having a pipe bomb placed outside his house and another injured in demonstrations at Belfast City Hall. NUJ general secretary Michelle Stanistreet said “The targeting of a journalist in this way is totally unacceptable and we are deeply concerned by this attempt to intimidate journalists.”

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