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## Local & National

### Inquiry told of Nelson's high profile

Thursday, April 17, 2008

By Chris Thornton

Solicitor Rosemary Nelson "drew in attention" as she battled to free a republican accused of murdering two police officers in Lurgan, the inquiry into her murder heard yesterday.

During the second day of his opening statement, inquiry lawyer Rory Phillips QC outlined how Mrs Nelson's representation of Colin Duffy brought her to public attention before she was murdered.

He had outlined how the inquiry will consider "the issue of whether or not that by making her prominent made her more vulnerable".

Mrs Nelson was murdered by a bomb in her car in March 1999. The inquiry - which began full hearings on Tuesday - is examining allegations of collusion in the murder.

Two years earlier she had defended Duffy when he was charged with murdering Constables John Graham and David Johnston, who were shot while on foot patrol in Lurgan.

The charges were dropped after Mrs Nelson mounted a campaign that prompted questions from Secretary of State Mo Mowlam, the Irish government and international human rights agencies.

Mr Phillips said she was "involved centrally" in bringing attention to the case and to allegations that police had threatened her.

"What I have tried to show is that very shortly after the charges were laid - indeed in the case of the Irish, before the charges were laid, before the case came on her desk - Rosemary Nelson was not only fighting her client's corner in terms of what was required in the criminal proceedings but also getting it to get wider exposure," Mr Phillips said.

"She drew in attention. She drew in attention not only to her client and her case and the injustice, as she saw it, of his position, but also - and very clearly - to herself."

Opening statements to the inquiry are expected to continue today and tomorrow.

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