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PRESS RELEASE

DENNIS HUTCHINGS TAKES CASE TO STRASBOURG ON BEHALF OF BRITISH ARMY VETERANS

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- A British Army veteran who served during the Troubles in Northern Ireland is 54x more likely to be prosecuted than an IRA terrorist.
- Yesterday, on Friday 1 October, Dennis Hutchings took his case that veterans have been subject to such discriminatory treatment in breach of the Human Rights Act to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.
- In August 2021 the Court of Appeal rejected Dennis' case, which was brought to force the UK Government to keep its electoral promise to introduce legal protections for veterans from ongoing vexatious prosecutions in Northern Ireland. The question the Court of Appeal had been asked to decide was whether UKG had actually made such a promise, and were therefore obliged to keep it, or were its words merely a broad and general statement of political intent.
- Former Veterans Minister, Johnny Mercer, gave an eye-witness account to the Court of Appeal that UKG had unequivocally promised to introduce such protections for NI veterans, and it was because UKG had repeatedly broken that promise that he had resigned in April 2021.
- Despite no one being more knowledgeable or involved in the matter than Mr. Mercer, who personally witnessed the facts and events to which he testified, the Court of Appeal dismissed his evidence as mere opinion; leaving Dennis with no option but to take his case to Strasbourg.

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- It is too late for Dennis, whose own criminal trial starts next Monday 4 October 2021, but he has pledged to carry on his fight on behalf of the dozen or so who are reported to still be facing prosecution.
- Mr. Hutchings would be grateful if any reporting would include the link to his campaign page - <https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/justice4veterans/>.

Quotes:

"It's too late for me but it's not too late for the government to do the right thing for all those veterans who served to maintain peace in Northern Ireland and who continue to live in fear of a knock on the door. But if the government won't act or listen to the veterans and the British people, then I hope Strasbourg will." **Dennis Hutchings**

"It couldn't be clearer. The numbers don't lie. Terrorists are treated better than British Army veterans in Northern Ireland. For years, the former have litigated for their human rights in Strasbourg. It is only right that we should now be fighting for those of our veterans. They deserve better." **Matthew Jury, McCue Jury & Partners.**

Notes to Editor

1. In 2020, Mr. Hutchings raised a public law challenge against the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland calling on the Government to make good on its election promises to give "veterans who served in the Troubles ... the protection they deserve". Mr. Hutchings' challenge was rejected by the High Court in June 2020. He appealed to the Court of Appeal in June 2020. This Appeal was rejected on 25 August 2021.
2. During the Troubles, around 3,500 people were killed and very many more injured. Statistics show that 90% of the deaths were caused by terrorists (60% by Republican paramilitaries and 30% by Loyalist paramilitaries). The number of state killings (by police and soldiers) stands at less than 10%. It is incontrovertible that all paramilitary killings were criminal, while the state killings – with a handful of exceptions – were lawful.
3. Despite being responsible for around 2,200 deaths, during the Troubles, all of which were unlawful, only a handful of Republican paramilitaries have been prosecuted since the Northern Ireland peace agreement in 1998. Meanwhile, six British Army veterans have faced or are still facing prosecution before the NI courts with reported plans to prosecute at least a dozen more.
4. While terrorists have been granted effective amnesties from prosecution, British Army veterans have been targeted in disproportionate numbers to be brought before

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the courts. Research indicates that veterans are 54x more likely to be prosecuted in Northern Ireland than Republican paramilitaries. These number don't add up and it is clear that veterans are being subject to discriminatory treatment in violation of the Human Rights Act.

5. The British Government promised to enact legislation by 18 March 2020 which would deal with Northern Ireland's legacy issues, including how to address investigations and prosecutions of Troubles related incidents. It has failed to do so. Further, in another act of discrimination, The Overseas Operations Act 2021 was brought into force in June 2021, which provides protections from vexatious and discriminatory treatment to veterans who served overseas but not to those who served in Northern Ireland; thereby creating two classes of veterans.

Contacts:

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