

2025.05.13

2.16 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding the criteria to re-open historic murder cases (OQ.105/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise what criteria is applied by the States of Jersey Police when considering whether to re-open any historic murder cases?

Answer

The decision to re-open past murder cases, sometimes referred to as ‘cold cases’ is taken with utmost seriousness and guided by a structured review process to ensure thoroughness and integrity. The key criteria include:

1. **New Information / Evidence:** The emergence of new, credible information / evidence that was not available during the original investigation. This could include new witness testimonies, or previously undiscovered material.
2. **Forensic & Technological Advances:** Significant advancements in forensic science, such as DNA analysis and digital capabilities, that can provide new insights or re-evaluate existing evidence.
3. **Legal and Procedural Changes:** Changes in legislation or legal precedents that may impact the interpretation of evidence or the application of the law.
4. **Public Interest:** Considerations of public interest, including the impact on the victim's family and the community, and the potential to enhance public confidence in the justice system.
5. **Operational Feasibility:** The capability and capacity of resources and the feasibility of conducting a thorough re-investigation without compromising current operational priorities.
6. **Review Recommendations:** Recommendations from formal cold case and thematic reviews, which identify new lines of inquiry or missed opportunities in the original investigation.

These criteria ensure that the decision to re-open a case is based on a balanced assessment of new information, technological capabilities, and the broader interests of justice. The States of Jersey Police fully recognise the public interest and the enduring impact that such cases have on families, communities, and the wider public.