

25 April 2024

Statement from The Attorney General for Northern Ireland on the need for caution around social media posting and commentary on active criminal proceedings

“In light of the events at Newry Courthouse on 24 April 2024, I am concerned about the potential impact of social media posting of recordings or commentary on the members of any jury hearing this case in the future.

Even if a member of the public did not intend to interfere with a court case, they can be found in contempt of court if something they publish creates a substantial risk that the course of justice in the criminal proceedings would be seriously impeded or prejudiced.

A sentence of up to two years imprisonment can be imposed.

Users of social media should therefore take great care before posting or re-posting clips or commentary and may wish to delete material at this point rather than risk proceedings being brought against them.

Further as the PSNI has stated, it is a criminal offence to identify the complainants, who must remain anonymous.

Any posts which would be likely to lead to the identification of the complainants in this case should be reported to the police by any concerned member of the public.”