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Ballymurphy: 'Spare us the lecture Sinn Fein – you've zero moral authority'

5-6 minutes



A policeman stands guard by a destroyed vehicle carrying 14 Protestant workmen in the Teebane area of Co Tyrone, 1992. The IRA attack killed eight

Kenny Donaldson was speaking following the publication of findings into the Ballymurphy bloodbath of 1971, when members of the Parachute Regiment shot and killed 10 people (with another man dying of a heart attack).

Mr Donaldson, who runs Innocent Victims United, an umbrella organisation encompassing a range of individual victims' groups, joined others in voicing sympathy and good wishes to the families of the innocent civilians who were killed by the Army.

In so doing, he also noted that there are many other victims whose quest for justice goes on.

He told the News Letter last night: "For the families of individuals killed over those three days who were not involved in terrorism, 50

years is a long time to wait for recognition.

“We acknowledge your pain, and we pray that today will help in your journey of healing.”

He was speaking after Sinn Fein’s Michelle O’Neill described the killings as an act of state murder which had been “covered up”.

“British state forces cannot be above the law,” she declared.

And party leader Mary Lou McDonald spoke out about the need to pursue “truth and justice in a balanced, transparent and fair manner”.

Mr Donaldson continued: “Ballymurphy was a human tragedy.

“We have always respected the right of all who believe that they were wronged through events carried out over the years of ‘the Troubles’ to pursue justice, truth and accountability, irrespective of who they understand the perpetrators to have been.

“But please, please – no lectures from the Provisional republican movement (inclusive of Sinn Fein) on this.

“You have no moral authority to speak on these matters when it is your movement who are the single greatest denier of justice, truth and accountability to those innocents you created.

“Going forward innocent victims/survivors of terrorism must also be afforded the same resources and focus on their cases and we trust that this fundamental issue of equality will be stood up for by all who claim to represent democracy and democratic values.

“The Claudy bombs of 1972, Dublin-Monaghan bombs of 1974, Kingsmills atrocity, 1976, Enniskillen Poppy Day bomb, 1987, Teebane, 1992 – and all the individual acts of terrorism which extinguished life – must also receive focus.

“Over 90% of the murders committed by the Provisional IRA in Co Fermanagh have gone unresolved, no justice, no truth and no accountability.

“Any new process for dealing with legacy must deal with this justice deficit and we need the involvement of both nation states – United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland.”

The CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet) website, hosted by Ulster University, gives a breakdown of the hard numbers behind the bloodshed of the Troubles.

It shows that, from 1969 to 2001, these groups killed the following numbers of people:

- > British Army: 299**
- > INLA/IPLO: 135**
- > PIRA: 1,705**
- > LVF: 18**
- > Official IRA: 53**
- > Real IRA: 29**
- > Red Hand Commando: 13**
- > RUC: 55**
- > UDA/UFF: 260**
- > UVF: 428**

Hundreds of others died at the hands of more obscure groups like “Protestant Action Force” or “Catholic Reaction Force” – many of which were just cover names for the bigger terrorist organisations.

In addition, the UDR killed eight people (a figure which is not counted as part of the 299 Army killings).

In total, the 3,532 deaths which CAIN has records for were carried out as follows:

- > British security: 365**
- > Irish security: 5**
- > Loyalists: 1,027**
- > Republicans: 2,058**
- > Not known: 77**

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Alistair Bushe

Editor