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## Local & National

### Murdered Paul was not a criminal, Irish minister tells Quinns

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

By Deborah McAleese

The parents of murdered County Armagh man Paul Quinn have welcomed reassurances from the Irish government that it does not believe their son was a criminal.

Ever since the 21-year-old was beaten to death in a shed in County Monaghan in October - reportedly by the IRA - there have been allegations that he had a criminal past.

Mr Quinn's family said the IRA killed him after he had defied an order to leave the country.

Sinn Fein denies any republican involvement. No-one has been charged with the murder.

Yesterday Mr Quinn's parents met Irish foreign minister Dermot Ahern and following the meeting they said that Mr Ahern told them the Irish government does not believe Mr Quinn was involved in criminal activity.

His mother Briege Quinn said that Mr Ahern's remarks had "lifted a great weight from our shoulders".

She added: "Once we got over the shock of Paul's death, nothing has caused us more hurt and pain than these allegations.

"It means a lot to us to have the minister say this, and we thank him very much for meeting us and telling us so clearly. This actually means more to us than getting someone into court. We know justice will take time, but the truth can be told right away."

The meeting at Mr Ahern's constituency office in Dundalk focused on the investigation into the murder and the family's distress at allegations of criminality made against their son.

The family was accompanied at the meeting by SDLP Newry and Armagh assembly member Dominic Bradley.

Mr Bradley said the SDLP will support the Quinn family until Paul's name is publicly cleared "and until the family get the justice they deserve".

Supporters of the Quinns have organised public meetings in the area to demand his killers be brought to justice.

The latest meeting in Crossmaglen last Thursday was attended by 300 people, including three Opposition members of the Dail, former Labour Party deputy leader Liz McManus and Fine Gael's Seymour Crawford and Fergus O'Dowd.

Sinn Fein councillors also attended the meeting and insisted they too wanted the killers to be brought to justice.

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