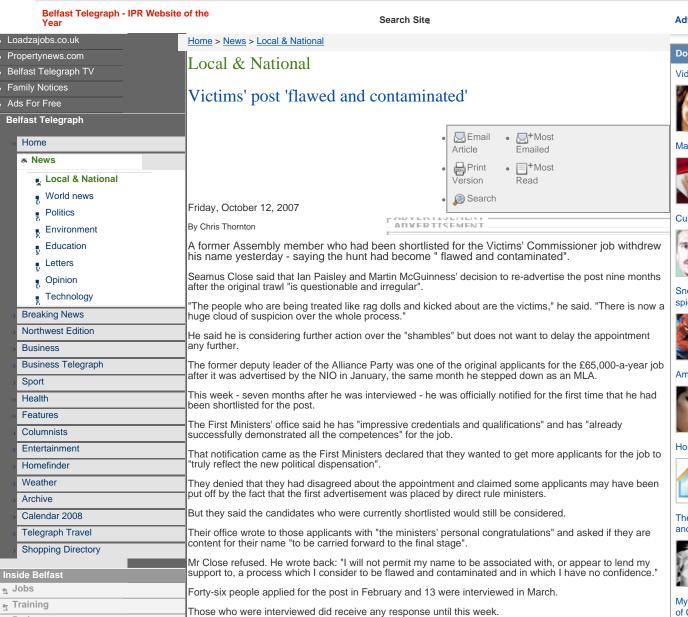
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A shortlist was handed to Mr Paisley and Mr McGuinness shortly after they took up office on May 8.

Mr Close said Monday's statement by the First Ministers to announce the new process "poses more

years ago - a post that the High Court later declared an illegal political favour to the DUP.

They later indicated they would make a decision about the job by early July, but no announcement was

Mr Paisley was the driving force behind the nomination of the interim Victims' Commissioner by the NIO two

"The ministers must really must know that they've had full ownership of this process since May 8," he said.

Are they only now realising now they have full executive powers? Or do they not accept the views of the

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independent panel which carried out the interviews? That's something which would have very serious implications."

He questioned the ministers' claim that " some potential applicants may have been deterred from putting themselves forward for the post during direct rule".

"Who told them that?" he asked. "Did those people not read the original ad? Did they miss the deadline?"

And he also attacked their desire to "bring forward a greater number of candidates".

"Is 46 not enough?" he asked. "Is it the number of applicants that matters rather than the ability or merit of those applicants?"

Mr Close said he is "actively considering other possible actions" but said he is "conscious that the outcome of that could be to delay the appointment of a commissioner and I don't want that to happen".

"I don't want to be part of any further procrastination," he said.

The new ad for the post says the successful candidate will have "the unwavering support" of the First Ministers.

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