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# News

DUP sees "no reason" for remembrance event

DUP politicians have defended their decision not to attend the Mayor's 'Time of Reflection' service on Sunday afternoon and have said they see "no reason" for it.

By Stephen Emerson

The event was held in the Guildhall and was, according to Mayor Helen Quigley, aimed at bringing the whole city together in an attempt to "move forward through reconciliation".

DUP members said the annual event, first organised when Sinn Fein's Gearoid O'Hara was Mayor two years ago, was an attempt by republicans to circumvent Remembrance Sunday.

Deputy Mayor Drew Thompson said he saw no reason for the service to exist.

"Our position is very clear. We recognise the 11th of November as the day of remembrance and reflection for anyone who wants to remember a loved one who has been murdered or killed. We cannot be part of something that holds murderers in the same vein as the murdered. We cannot let widows stand beside the person who killed their husband."

East Derry MP Gregory Campbell said DUP members would not attend the event until it was clear who was being remembered.

Issue

"The issue is not whether people are prepared to go to go to an event run by a Sinn Fein or an SDLP mayor. That is not the issue. What I want to know is who the event is commemorating. Killers should not be remembered beside those were killed. If innocent victims are being remembered alongside those who made them innocent victims then we will not be going, not this year, next year or any other year.

"This is a clear problem that needs to be addressed but at the moment no one is prepared to address it," he said.

Mayor Helen Quigley said the format of the service had been changed this year to be more "inclusive".

"By creating an opportunity for reflection and reconciliation in a neutral space, I afforded an opportunity not only to look back but to look forward on the theme of reconciliation, which was particularly fitting at this time of year.

"I look forward to a future where the people of the city can live, work and socialise together and where the city truly embraces all of its citizens and where all its people are at ease with one another."

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