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Families deserve judicial inquiry into collusion

(Jim Gibney, [Irish News](#))

In a filing cabinet inside the office of Nuala O'Loan, the police ombudsman, there is a damning report into collusion between the RUC Special Branch and the UVF in north Belfast.

In a filing cabinet inside the Belfast office of the Public Prosecution Service there is a report into collusion between the crown forces and loyalists. The report could, if acted on, lead to serious charges being laid against 24 members of the crown forces.

There are many files in many filing cabinets in government offices in Dublin, Belfast and London, containing reports into collusion arising from enquiries – Stalker, Samson, Stevens, Cory, Barron, McEntee.

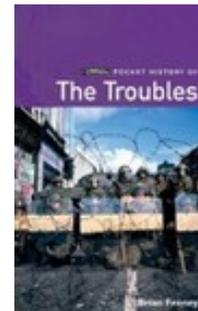
These files tell the startling story of British state forces, as a matter of policy, using loyalists to kill civilians, primarily Catholics.

Collusion is under scrutiny in public inquiries into the killings of Robert Hamill, Rosemary Nelson and Billy Wright.

The British government is trying to prevent the truth emerging about the extent and depth of collusion in the killing of Pat Finucane. Every loyalist involved was an agent.

Two weeks ago a report into the deaths by loyalists of 18 people, by a joint committee of the Oireachtas, revealed that the Irish government in 1975 complained to Harold Wilson, then British prime minister and later Margaret Thatcher, that their forces were using loyalists to kill people north and south.

The committee's report also censured the Irish government and the Gardai for cooperating with the crown forces when they knew, "...that British security personnel were working with, and as, loyalist paramilitaries" were killing Irish citizens.



[Pocket History of the Troubles](#)
by Brian Feeney

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O'Loan's report will tell the incredible, harrowing and disturbing tale of a UVF unit run by the RUC Special Branch through their agent Mark Haddock. It is believed this unit was responsible for killing 21, perhaps many more, Catholics and Protestants between 1991 and 2000.

This unit is also linked through another agent to the massacre in Loughinisland when loyalists killed six people in June 1994.

The agent nicknamed the 'mechanic' previously owned the car used by the killers and told *The Irish News* he passed on this information to the RUC and was released without charge. The PSNI later destroyed this car and potential vital forensic evidence in the massacre.

Those responsible for these killings were protected by the Special Branch.

The only reason there is a public focus on the activities of the Mount Vernon UVF is because Raymond McCord, whose son Raymond was killed by them, relentlessly pursued his killers.

Two years ago he convinced O'Loan to help him. Her report may well prove to be as devastating in its findings on collusion as others like Stevens's investigation into the killing of Pat Finucane. Or the exposure of senior UDA figure Brian Nelson and his handler Brigadier Gordon Kerr who was in charge of the Force Research Unit, the organisation which directed the loyalists. After reading the report Peter Hain described it as "extremely uncomfortable for the British state".

A former RUC detective Johnston Brown has stated publicly that three weeks after the killing of Sharon McKenna in January 1993 Haddock could have been charged with the killing. Had this happened many people now dead might still be alive. The Special Branch prevented Haddock from being charged. Brown further claims the protection of Haddock is not an isolated case.

Haddock's reign of terror ended not as a result of anything the RUC or PSNI did. He is in jail today because a person he savagely assaulted lived and gave evidence in court against him.

During the conflict loyalist paramilitaries killed more than 1,000 Catholics and nationalists. There is growing evidence that British crown forces were involved with loyalists in all of these murders.

A few years ago such a claim would have been dismissed. Not any longer such is the scale of collusion revealed in the many enquiries confirming what Sinn Féin were saying for years while others including the SDLP were silent.

The case for an international, independent judicial enquiry into collusion is both overwhelming and compelling. The British and Irish governments should jointly sponsor such an inquiry. If the British refuse then the Irish government should proceed.

They owe it to the families of those killed.

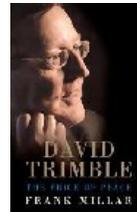
December 15, 2006

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