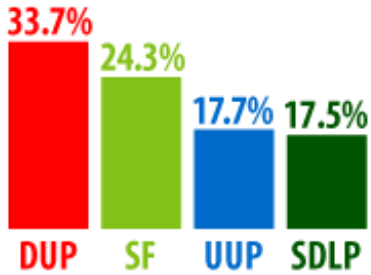


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## DONALDSON WELCOMES VICTIMS COMMISSIONERS REPORT

DUP MP for Lagan Valley Jeffrey Donaldson today welcomed the report from the Victims Commissioner and praised the dedicated and hard work of Bertha McDougall. Speaking after the release of the report Mr Donaldson said,



*"I would like to applaud the hard work of Bertha McDougall in highlighting many of the needs of victims and putting forward ways in which to ensure that victims are treated fairly. The publication of a report such as this shows why the position of a Victims Commissioner, lobbied for by the DUP, is so necessary in Northern Ireland.*

*This report highlights the importance of long term funding for individuals and victims groups. This is a key priority within the victims sector which the DUP has highlighted for many years. For too long victims and their needs have been ignored, whilst funding has been disproportionately directed to ex-prisoners organisations. Victims have been forced to endure second class status while terrorists have been lauded and applauded.*

*The call for the creation of a UDR Fund is to be enthusiastically welcomed and is long overdue. The UDR deserve parity with both the RUC and Prison Service who each have their own similar funds.*

*The DUP has always put the needs of victims as a top priority and we welcome this report as a first step in redressing the imbalance. We intend to keep raising these issues at the highest level and to ensure that the commitment for long term funding for victims given by the Prime Minister is delivered upon. It is vital that we obtain financial security for those who served Northern Ireland so bravely and put their lives on the line. It is equally important that all the civilians who lost their lives to terrorists gain the recognition and support they undoubtedly deserve."*

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