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Gerry Adams MP MLA launches 20th Anniversary Gibraltar/Milltown events programme

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Speaking at the launch of 20th Anniversary Gibraltar/Milltown events programme Sinn Féin president has welcomed the families of those who died to the event.

Mr Adams said:

"Inniu, táimid ag seoladh ár gclár don chomóradh Gibraltar/Milltown agus don daoine a maraíodh ag gníomhaithe na Breatain, Márta 1988.

Tá daoine ó achan clann anseo agus ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghébhail do na daoine a chur an clár seo le cheile fosta.

Bhí me ansin ag an am (1988), agus is cuimhin liom nuair a chuala mé faoin scéal ó Gibraltar agus daoine ag caint agus ansin thainig na hainmeacha amach de na laochra Óglaigh na hÉireann a fuair bás, Seán Savage agus Dan Mc Cann agus Maireád Farrell, ban iontach cróga.

Tá a fhios againn go bhfuil bearna mór idir sin agus an t-am nuair a fhill na coirpeanna ar ais go hÉirinn.

Chomh maith le sin fuair Kevin Mc Cracken bás ag an am chéanna agus ag an reilg fuair Thomas Mc Erlaine, John Murray agus Caoimhín Mac Brádaigh bás fosta.

Agus ag tóradh eile fuair beirt "undercover soldiers" ó Arm na Breataine bás fosta agus tá a fhios againn go bhfuil clann ag na daoine sin fosta, agus beidh muid ag smaoineadh orthu fosta.

I would firstly like to welcome the families of those who died to this event.

All of us live very busy lives but there are things which remain with us in our memories and I remember when the rumours started around the West of the city that some people had been killed in Gibraltar and then rumours about who they would be and eventually the names came out.

I also remember when I visited the families of Seán, Maireád

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and Dan, and then the long work to get the remains home began, and in between times Kevin McCracken was killed in Turf Lodge and I remember when we were talking to the families earlier on it struck me that people must be sensitive as the emotions do come flooding back.

I remember that the families wanted the lids of the coffins opened and myself, Martin McGuinness and others did that.

It was a very very sad and awful time.

It is my strong view that the killings in Gibraltar were authorised by Margaret Thatcher, and it is my strong view that the Irish government of the day passed information to the authorities about the movements of those killed.

I cannot prove that but that is my conviction.

When Kevin and those in Milltown, John, Caoimhín, and Thomas were killed people showed huge bravery and courage.

There have yet to be inquests into those killings.

I was there when it happened, people were injured.

The man who did the killing boasted that he was ferried back and forth through roadblocks by serving members of the RUC.

I was conscious of the police van on the M1.

We are very mindful of the fact that at Caoimhín's funeral two British soldiers were killed and we do not believe in any hierarchy of victims and we are mindful that the families will also be grieving.

The truth is yet to come on this also.

I also recall that this was referred to as the battle of the funerals and mysteriously the RUC/British Army disappeared from the usual role of occupying estates, peoples homes and wake houses.

That was then, this is now, we are in a better place but there is still much to do in terms of the continuing process of change that is required.

We are unashamedly Irish Republicans and we want to see an end to the causes of conflict in our country, we want to see Ireland united.

We have a strategy to do that and we will prevail and get an Ireland where people can live in harmony together.

It is remarkable to see the turnout this morning and it is testament to the feeling within the Republican community still.

We are here to launch the events remembering Gibraltar today but I would also like to speak about the Stormont event celebrating international Women's day.

As this fell upon the Gibraltar/ Milltown anniversary we decided to mark this around Maireád Farrell who was my

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friend and the friend of many here just as Sheena Campbell and Maire Drumm have already been honoured.

Maireád was a brave, lovely and wonderful Irish woman.

There is no intention to offend anyone by this event and certainly no intention to see Maireád's good name embroiled in a row which has more to do with the sense of Unionism than anything else.

And it is gravely insensitive that a counter event to commemorate the work of the SAS has been talked about by Unionists.

We all know the role of the SAS.

I think we must all calm down around this.

I hear Unionist politicians talking tough on this and they must know how hurtful it is to the families to hear their relatives being called terrorists.

We must all have empathy on this and reflect where we have come from and there must be political will to resolve this.

These events are to remember, to find the truth and always to point towards the future.

The past must not repeat itself.

Mo bhuíochas d'achan clann, do Danny Devenney agus do na daoine a chur na himeachtaí le chéile." Críoch

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