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Updated statement on investigation into murder of Kevin McGuigan

20 Aug 2015

By Detective Superintendent Kevin Geddes, who is in overall charge of the investigation.

“Kevin McGuigan was shot a number of times outside his home at Comber Court in the Short Strand area of Belfast on Wednesday 12 August.

“One man has appeared in court on a firearms charge. We have made another 8 arrests – some of those suspects are still in custody. We have conducted several searches over the past week and recovered a number of firearms.

“This investigation is progressing and although it is still in its early stages, I can say that we are following definite lines of enquiry.

I have two appeal points to make:

Firstly, anyone who was in the area of Comber Court on the night of Wednesday 12 August who may have seen two people wearing dark clothing just before or after the shooting at 8.50pm. We believe that they ran through a number of houses in the Harper Street and Beechfield Street area after the shooting.

Secondly, anyone who has any information about the circumstances surrounding the murder.

I would ask anyone with any information to contact police, either on the 101 telephone number or through the independent charity Crimestoppers 0800 555 111 where you will not be asked for personal details.

I understand tensions and emotions are high in the community. I would appeal for calm in the community and for no retaliation. No other family should have to suffer the pain of loss which the McGuigan family is currently enduring.”

Asked at a news conference about the background and motivation for the murder, Detective Superintendent Geddes said: “There has been considerable speculation about motive and responsibility. The Police Service does not deal in speculation. I have to deal with hard information, intelligence and facts. A main line of enquiry in this investigation is that Kevin McGuigan was murdered by individuals seeking revenge for the murder of Jock Davison in May. Part of this main line of enquiry is that a group which calls itself Action Against Drugs (AAD) was closely involved in the murder.

“On 6 August AAD stated that it intended to ‘execute’ the killer or killers of Jock Davison. Our assessment is that AAD is a group of individuals from a variety of backgrounds – some criminals, some violent dissident republicans and some former members of the Provisional IRA who have formed into a dangerous, possibly murderous, grouping in order to pursue their own criminal agenda. This criminal agenda includes extortion and violence against the nationalist and republican community.

“Our assessment is that AAD is an independent group which is not part of the Provisional IRA. But it is also our assessment that some members and associates of AAD are, or were, members of the Provisional IRA.

“One of our major lines of enquiry is that members of the Provisional IRA were involved in this murder. I have no information to say at this stage whether this was sanctioned at a command level or not and I am not prepared to speculate about that.

“I would appeal to anyone with information about this murder to come forward to police.”

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