

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Meeting of the Liaison Sub-Committee on Confidence Building Measures

Belfast, 8 October 1997

Missing Persons

Background Note

1. The Mitchell Report notes in para. 52 that the *"provision of information on the status of missing persons, and the return of those who have been forced to leave their communities under threat"* would help *"demonstrate a commitment to peaceful methods and so build trust among other parties and alleviate the fears and anxieties of the general population"*.

2. A number of groups including Families Against Intimidation and Terror (FAIT) and Families of the Disappeared have been actively campaigning for the return of bodies secretly buried by paramilitaries over the last 25 years. There are approximately 14 people whose bodies have disappeared since 1972, the vast majority at the hands of paramilitaries. Calls on the paramilitary organisations (mainly the IRA) to provide information on the whereabouts of these missing bodies were stepped up during the first IRA ceasefire and have been renewed with the coming into being of the second IRA ceasefire.

3. It is believed by the Families of the Disappeared that one of the victims may have been abducted by the members of the British Army. Brendan McGaw was abducted from Twinbrook in 1978 by nine men in grey boiler suits. He had been a witness to the shooting dead of a republican, Jack McCartan, in an operation widely believed to have been carried out by the British Army. The list also includes SAS Captain Robert Nairac, believed abducted and killed by members or associates of the IRA in Armagh.

4. Most recently the Taoiseach made an appeal in the Dáil on 30 September, "that it would be of considerable benefit if the bodies of those who have disappeared were returned for Christian burial to their families who in their grief for many years have been left wondering and without knowledge as to their location".

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5. Mr. Seamus McHendry, son-in-law of one of the disappeared, said at the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation that, "People must be allowed to bury their dead with dignity, instead of lying in fields and ditches. I would just like very briefly, to say this to the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation. I demand peace and I demand to be reconciled".

6. Paramilitary groups have also over the years resorted to 'exiling' individuals on fear of punishment or death. Infromation in terms of numbers and individuals remains sketchy at present.

Security Section
Anglo-Irish Division
6 October 1997

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Missing Bodies

Background Note

1. A campaign to recover the bodies of persons missing as a result of abduction by the IRA in the 1970s and early 1980s was initiated in April 1995. Many of the victims in question were petty criminals, abducted by the paramilitaries.

2. The campaign was launched in the media by the Belfast Telegraph and the Sunday World in April this year. The names of 13 missing persons have been listed in connection with the campaign, although there are estimates that as many as 20 such cases may exist.

3. The main spokesperson for the group `Families of the Disappeared' is Séamus McKendry, a son-in-law of Jean McConville, one of the victims.

4. There have been reports that Mr. McKendry has been contacted by individuals in East Belfast with a view to campaigning for the recovery of missing victims of Loyalist violence.

5. The group's intentions have been supported by Fr. Denis Faul and Dr. Joe Hendron M.P., and the human rights group, Families Against Intimidation and Terror.

Minister of State, Michael Ancram has raised the matter with Sinn Féin during their exploratory dialogue. The British Prime Minister, John Major has also pledged to look into the matter during a discussion with one of the relatives.

The Minister for Social Welfare, Mr. Proinsias de Rossa T.D., has urged republican and loyalist paramilitaries to identify where missing victims are buried.

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6. Gerry Adams has stated that anyone with information about any of those missing should contact the families. He has also held meetings with family members on a number of occasions. However, campaign members have criticised Sinn Féin inaction in the matter.

7. Ministerial correspondence has been received from 'Families of the Disappeared' seeking a meeting with the Tánaiste to discuss the matter.

8. Claims have been made by former IRA members that the bodies are buried on the Black Mountain, outside Belfast. There are also claims that several bodies were concealed on a building site in the Glen Road area of West Belfast. Reports also indicate that the RUC has appointed a senior officer to investigate information relating to the cases.

Anglo-Irish Division
20 July 1995

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LOG OF MISSING PERSONS (PRESUMED DEAD)
AS A RESULT OF NORTHERN IRELAND SITUATION

	Name	Age		Missing Since
1.	Jean McConville	37		7/12/1972
2.	Kevin McKee			1972
3.	Seamus Wright			1972/1974 (?)
4.	John McIlroy			1974
5.	Patrick Mooney	28		8/1976
6.	Columba McVeigh	17		1977[1]
7.	Capt Robert Nairac			14/5/1977
8.	Brian Kinney	22		5/1978
9.	John McClory	18		5/1978
10.	Gerald Evans			27/3/1979
11.	Charlie Armstrong	55		1981
12.	Sean Murphy	25		4/12/1981
13.	Patrick McCoy	59		7/1983 [2]
14.	Séamus Ruddy		INLA	1985[3]
15.	Brendan Megraw	23		8/4/1978

[1]Possible involvement of Capt. Nairac and British Secret Service

[2]These instances have been gleaned from media coverage of this issue in recent days.

[3]Reputed to have been murdered by INLA on continent

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