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Local & National

Outrage sparked by memorial seat for paramilitary

Wednesday, October 03, 2007

By Deric Henderson

The Equality Commission has been urged to challenge a decision to allow a memorial seat to be erected at the graveside of a top paramilitary in Northern Ireland.

Nationalists protested after councillors in Craigavon, Co Armagh voted in favour of a request by the family of Mark "Swinger" Fulton, a member of the outlawed Loyalist Volunteer Force, who was found dead in a prison cell five years ago.

Fulton (42), has been linked by nationalists to a string of sectarian murders in Mid Ulster, including killing human rights solicitor Rosemary Nelson by a bomb in 1999. He was never convicted of any crime, although he died awaiting trial for conspiring to murder a rival loyalist.

Dolores Kelly, an SDLP member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, said she was outraged and would be asking for a meeting with the Equality Commission to seek its intervention.

She said: "It is very hard for anyone from the nationalist community, which bore the brunt of LVF terror, to understand the utter blindness of unionists on this issue."

Ms Kelly added: "Are they really so blinkered that they will put through evil motions like this on a pure sectarian knee-jerk?"

Fulton's grave is in a council-owned and maintained cemetery on the outskirts of the town, where the LVF conducted a campaign of terror against Catholics.






One of their victims was a council worker, Adrian Lamph (29), a Catholic who was shot dead by a gunman in April 1998.

The council agreed to permit the erection of a summer seat at a meeting last June, but only became aware of who it was dedicated to last month when an inscription was submitted for approval. It was agreed by a vote of 12-8.

The inscription reads: "Fulton 1960-2002. In Loving memory of our dear father Mark. Always remembered and sadly missed by son Lee, daughter Alanna and son-in-law Andrew. Always in our hearts."


Craigavon's mayor, Robert Smith, a member of the Democratic Unionist Party, said the memorial contained a simple inscription with no reference to any paramilitary organisation.

He added: "If there was something on that inscription that said 'volunteer' or was a memorial to a terrorist I certainly would not be approving it."

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