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Local & National

Politicians not welcome at massacre memorial service

Saturday, January 06, 2007

By Claire McNeilly

Ulster politicians were yesterday absent from an annual memorial service after victims' group FAIR asked them to stay away.

More than 30 relatives of the victims gathered at the site of the IRA Kingsmill massacre in order to commemorate those who perished 31 years ago.

The short 15-minute service took place at 11am at the site of the 10 killings, half-a-mile from the village of Whitecross, Co Armagh.






FAIR spokesman Willie Frazer said that both the prospect of Sinn Fein in government and concerns over victims' issues led to a number of families objecting to political representation at yesterday's service.

"Around 30 people turned up to pay their respects this morning, but others didn't come because they still feel too intimidated to attend," he said. "A number of families felt that they didn't want any political parties present this year, so we asked them not to come.



"Politicians have been present in the past, but this year we asked them not to attend because we believe they have a lot of work to do and many important issues to resolve before they can face the victims' families.

"Not only Kingsmill victims, but a lot of victims of terrorism feel that we are in the same position now as we were 31 years ago."

Ten Protestant textile workers - all men - were shot dead in the massacre.

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They were returning home from work in a mini-bus.

"We don't believe in this whole push to get Sinn Fein into policing.

"Policing isn't up for negotiation.

"People should automatically accept law and order," Mr Frazer said.

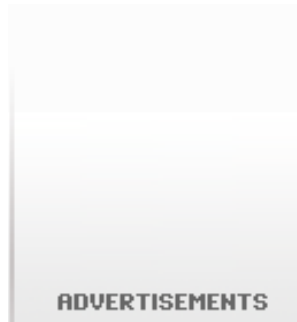
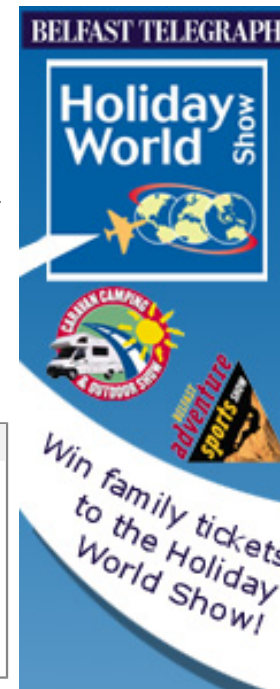
"We have nothing against any individual politician, but victims were told to stand their ground and keep their spirit - they've done that, but all they see is the terrorists being rewarded.

"This was probably one of the worst atrocities of the Troubles, given the circumstances.

"We hope an investigation into it - and all the others - will start soon."

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