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'Cat' considers ombudsman co-operation

Andersonstown News

Ciaran Barnes

18/01/2007

The former RUC officer at the centre of the Police Ombudsman probe into the Gerry Adams murder bid has said he will consider speaking to investigators from Nuala O'Loan's office.

On Tuesday the Ombudsman's office confirmed it was looking into whether Special Branch had prior knowledge of the 1984 attack.

The Sinn Féin President was shot five times by UDA gunmen as he left Belfast Magistrates Court.

Mr Adams complained to Ms O'Loan after the Andersonstown News revealed a loyalist informant nicknamed 'the Cat' – the former military commander of the Rathcoole UDA – told his handlers of the murder bid a week in advance.

Two weeks ago Ombudsman investigators made representations to the Andersonstown News seeking further information about the assassination attempt.

Now the former RUC detective who told us Special Branch were forewarned says he will consider speaking to Ms O'Loan.

"I am considering it," he said. "Obviously I have concerns that my identity will be made public, but I will certainly consider it."

The Ombudsman's office yesterday confirmed it had received a complaint from Mr Adams and an initial investigating officer is examining the police handling of the matter.

UDA leader John Gregg, himself murdered in 2003 during a loyalist feud, was jailed for his part in the ambush.

The year after the murder bid 'the Cat' fled Belfast after being unmasked as an informant.

The UDA attempted to kill him in Millisle, Co Down, in 1989 after learning that he was living in the seaside village.

However, the informant got wind of the planned attack and left his new home.

Loyalist sources say he is currently living in North Antrim and is no longer under threat of death.

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