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Police fears over 'Bloody Sunday' march

[GERRY BRAIDEN](#)

January 16 2008

An Irish Republican parade, commemorating the Bloody Sunday killings of 14 civilians by the British Army in Northern Ireland in 1972, could be banned amid fears of counter-demonstrations and planned disorder by far-right groups.

Strathclyde Police will present its concerns to the city council tomorrow at what is expected to be a private meeting about the march through Glasgow, in the hope the authority will pull the plug on the parade.

The Herald understands that the police are concerned about information posted on a website run by Ulster Loyalist sympathisers detailing the route of the march and what they planned to do.

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The parade, organised by Cairde na hEireann (Friends of Ireland) is scheduled for January 26 and clashes with a home fixture for Rangers, potentially stretching police resources.

Although the event passed off peacefully last year, in previous years it has been marred by violence and arrests.

In 2006 around 400 protesters threw missiles at the 1000 marchers from behind police lines. The violence erupted despite police and the council moving the parade to 9.30am.

Marchers were also accused by the officer in charge of antagonising the counter-protesters.

In 2005 there were three arrests when shoppers had to take cover as a group of around

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300 tried to ambush the procession at Queen Street station.

In his review of parades in 2005 former Strathclyde Police chief constable Sir John Orr recommended that a march should be banned if it gave a risk of intimidation to the local community or of serious disruption.

Last night a police spokeswoman said: "We will make our observations which will be considered by the council."

Until recently the Bloody Sunday commemoration was one of only two organised annually by Cairde na hEireann in Scotland.

But last year the group, which is sympathetic to mainstream republicanism, took the decision to pull the plug on the James Connolly march in Edinburgh after 20 years.

It is till unclear whether the West of Scotland Bands Alliance, a smaller organisation with leanings towards dissident republicanism and which split from Cairde na hEireann, plans to march in Glasgow next weekend.


A spokesman for Cairde na hEireann said: "While we understand the police concerns, we should be entitled to demonstrate like everyone else and should not suffer because of the violent actions of others."



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