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IRA chief ordered to probe Quinn killing

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By Tom Brady Security Editor

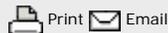
Monday March 10 2008

 An senior Provisional IRA figure was sent to the Border to carry out an investigation into the involvement of former associates in the murder of Paul Quinn, who was battered to death.

The convicted terrorist, who had served on the IRA's ruling army council, was ordered to hold an inquiry after Provisional bosses became concerned at the likely political fallout if it was clearly established that associates were directly involved in the savage attack.

Within 24 hours of the murder in a shed on a farm near the Co

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Monaghan village of Oram on October 20 last, gardai and the PSNI were convinced that the killers had former Provisional connections.

Cross-border inquiries since then have backed up that belief, which has been fully accepted by the Government.

A report from the International Monitoring Commission (IMC) is due to be published shortly and is expected to find that former members of the IRA or their associates were responsible for the attack.

That view has already been publicly aired by IMC member and former Scotland Yard anti-terrorist chief, John Grieve, and Justice Minister Brian Lenihan, on the basis of police reports.

However, both men stressed there was no evidence to indicate that the murder had been sanctioned by the IRA leadership.

The senior Provisional figure, who made the internal inquiries, is understood to have spoken to a select group of former comrades in the Border region to establish the reasons for the attack and assess the implications, if criminal charges were brought against any associates.

Anti-terrorist police officers on both sides of the Border believe Paul Quinn fell foul of a number of local republicans, including some with relatively senior status in the region, after being involved in clashes with other young men.

As a result, a group of men with Provisional links decided to take action against him.

The 21-year-old victim was lured to the shed where he was set upon by a gang of up to 10 men and subjected to a barrage of blows from iron bars and cudgels, which inflicted injuries to almost every part of his body.

Mr Quinn's internal injuries included damage to his brain and lungs. A post-mortem examination concluded that he died from blunt force trauma, as a result of the injuries.

Gardai subsequently carried out a forensic examination of the shed but found few clues and concluded that friends of the killers had "cleaned up" the shed before leaving the scene.

Over 1,200 leads have emerged from police inquiries.

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