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Quinn murder may have been work of Provos, says Lenihan

by **Uin Brady**
 Security Editor
 Thursday December 20
 2007

The Government has accepted that former members of the Provisional IRA or their associates may have been

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involved in the murder of Paul Quinn, who was battered to death near the Border in October.

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What are these?

Justice Minister Brian Lenihan acknowledged for the first time last night that there could be a Provisional IRA link

to the horrific crime, but told the Irish Independent there was no evidence to indicate that the murder had been sanctioned by the IRA leadership.

The minister was commenting on his meeting earlier yesterday in Dublin with Paul Quinn's parents.

He agreed with the view expressed by International Monitoring Commission member John Grieve that former members of the terrorist organisation or their associates could have been responsible.

Mr Lenihan revealed that the gardai were following up more than 600 leads and said the list of suspects had been narrowed as a result of their enquiries.

He paid tribute to the "excellent co-operation" being provided by the PSNI to the gardai in their joint door-to-door enquiries in Cullyhanna and Crossmaglen and said there had been a huge response from the community in the south Armagh area.

Ahern

Mr Lenihan said he had made it clear to the victim's parents, Stephen and Briega, that no effort was being spared on either side of the Border to bring the culprits to justice.

Taoiseach Bertie Ahern also turned up unexpectedly at the meeting and assured the Quinns that he was satisfied that their son had not been involved in criminality.

He said his remarks at the time of the murder had been misconstrued and that he had not intended to make an issue out of Paul's character.

There was no evidence whatsoever that Paul Quinn was a criminal, he added.

Mr Lenihan said last night that the cross-Border investigation had highlighted a significant sea change in the attitudes of people in south Armagh to policing, and a lot of information was being passed on to detectives.

The Quinn family have dismissed claims by senior Sinn Fein figures that the murder was linked to fuel smuggling as totally false, and said those allegations were an attempt to take the focus off potential IRA involvement.

After the meeting in the Dail yesterday, the Quinns said they were happy with the Taoiseach's clarification and thanked him for his presence at the talks.

"It was a surprise," Mrs Quinn added. "We thought he might be there, but we hadn't an appointment to see him.

"He sympathised with us and said the Irish Government were doing their best, and that was good enough for us, and that Paul's name was cleared of criminality."

Mr Quinn (21) had been told to leave his native Cullyhanna after clashing with the republican son of another republican, but ignored the warnings before he was murdered.

- Tom Brady Security Editor



Murder victim Paul Quinn's parents, Stephen and Briega, from Cullyhanna, Co Armagh, leave Lenihan's house following their meeting with Justice Minister Brian Lenihan yesterday

€2,250 each

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