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Paisley to be asked to retract false allegation

By Margaret Canning

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A CO ARMAGH man who was wrongly accused by Ian Paisley of involvement in republican terrorism will travel to Stormont tomorrow to request an apology from the first minister in his final week in office.

In 1999 Mr Paisley used parliamentary privilege to accuse Eugene Reavey from Whitecross of being involved in the Kingsmill massacre of 10 Protestant workmen in January 1976.

He claimed Mr Reavey's name and those of 19 other men were contained in a security-force document though the source of the document was never revealed. Mr Reavey was exonerated

at the time by the then chief constable

Sir Ronnie Flanagan, who said there was no police intelligence that could link Mr Reavey with the attack or other terror activity.

The night before the Kingsmill massacre, Mr Reavey's brothers John Martin (24), Brian (22) and 17-year-old Anthony were gunned down in their Whitecross home by the notorious UVF 'Glenanne Gang', which included security force members.

Three members of the O'Dowd family in Gilford, Co Down, were murdered in a coordinated attack that night.

The Historical Enquiries Team last year described the brothers as "innocent victims of senseless sectarian violence".

Mr Reavey said previous attempts to extract an apology from Mr Paisley had failed.

His mother Sadie (85) wrote to Mr Paisley's wife Eileen asking her to intervene but Mr Reavey said the letter and others were not acknowledged.

"Mr Paisley seems to forget he made these comments about me and left me in a very vulnerable position – only there was a ceasefire at the time, I would have had to leave my house," Mr Reavey said.

"The evening of the Kingsmill

massacre I was taking my brothers' corpses home.

"Paisley said he was given a document [with my name] but I believe that was prepared by someone with alternative motives.

"There is a possibility he didn't check the validity of the document.

"Ronnie Flanagan completely exonerated me of any blame whatsoever and said he didn't want to question me about Kingsmill or any other activities.

"But still Paisley didn't or couldn't be gracious enough to admit he had made an error."

Dominic Bradley, SDLP assembly member for Newry and Armagh, said the family had endured "unimaginable suffering" in the years since the brothers' murders and called for Mr Paisley to apologise for his remarks.

"A heartfelt apology would go a long way to bring the Reavey family nearer to closure in this terrible chapter of

their lives and go along way to demonstrate to the nationalist community that Mr Paisley is sincere in his commitment to bringing people of all sides closer together.”

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