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Sinn Fein and SDLP clash over Provo murder link

By Barry McCaffrey and William Graham

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SINN Fein and the SDLP last night clashed over the Independent Monitoring Commission's (IMC) assertion that there was no evidence to link the IRA to the killing of south Armagh man Paul Quinn.

Yesterday the IMC said it had concluded that the IRA had not carried out the murder of 21-year-old Mr Quinn who died in hospital hours after being savagely beaten by a masked gang at an isolated farm house in Co

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“We think that the attack on Paul Quinn was planned and carried out by local people and that it arose from local disputes,” the IMC said.

“Whatever the immediate reason for the killing certain aspects of these disputes go back some time and were not unconnected with continuing illegal activity.”

The IMC said it believed former IRA members or associates had been among the gang who had carried out the brutal attack on Mr Quinn but said it could find no evidence that the IRA had ordered the killing.

“The fact that some local members or former members or associates of the organisation were involved in the incident does not in our view justify attributing it to the PIRA,” its report read.

Insisting that the IMC report had vindicated Mr Quinn's parents in blaming the PIRA for their son's death, SDLP assembly member Dominic Bradley said: “Far from ab-solving the Provisional IRA in south Armagh the IMC has essentially reiterated what it said last November and repeated to the Quinn family in my presence – that current and former members of the Provisional IRA were involved.

“No-one in Cullyhanna has ever claimed the [IRA] army council ordered this murder.

“On the contrary, it is quite clear that the killers were disobeying the organisation but they were acting within its local structures.

“The IMC has fully recognised the nature of Provisional community control in south Armagh and the way that senior provisionals demand, but no longer get, deference from young people in the area.

“That is the real key to the Quinn murder and Sinn Fein cannot evade its own responsibility for Provo community control.”

Reacting to the IMC assertion that the PIRA had not been responsible for Paul Quinn's murder, Sinn Fein MP Martin McGuinness said: “We said from the very beginning that we did not believe the IRA was involved in the murder of Paul Quinn.

“Now the IMC, a body with which we fundamentally disagree, has come out and actually agreed with our analysis.”


Insisting that any information about Mr Quinn's murder should be passed on to the police, Mr McGuinness said: “The people who murdered Paul Quinn are murderers and criminals.

“There is a duty and responsibility on everybody within society, including the republican/nationalist community in south Armagh, to cooperate with the Garda and the PSNI to ensure that these criminals are

brought to justice.”

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