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Call for action against 'UVF hitman'

(Allison Morris, [Irish News](#))

A victims' group has called for action to be taken against a self-confessed UVF man who claims to have been involved in a number of sectarian killings during the early 1990s.

Paul Beattie (38) claimed to have been a 'hitman' for the south Belfast UVF between 1991 and 1994 before he was jailed for 14-years on charges of attempted murder and robbery.

Beattie told a Sunday newspaper his 'commander' would hand him photo montages with names and addresses of victims.

He said they would 'scout' the victim before working out "where the best place was to take the person out".

"As soon as it was over we just went back to the bar or went home. We just blended back in as if nothing had happened," he told the *Sunday World*.

His comments have caused outrage amongst victims of UVF violence who are now calling on the Chief Constable to act.

Andree Murphy, deputy director of Relatives For Justice (RFJ), said the organisation would be meeting with concerned victims' families over the coming days.

"If Mr Beattie was handed 'montages' as he states this points to the policy and practice of the late 1980s and 1990s of military and special branch handing over files and photographs to loyalists," she said.

"Indeed it was this revelation following the murder of Loughlin Maginn which prompted the first Stevens investigation.

"This man states that he was a hitman and involved in a number of murders – he has been held amenable for none of them.

"There are a number of murders during the time period and in the area where this man was active and these revelations

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might assist families as they seek answers and search for justice.

"The Secretary of State Sean Woodward must make a statement on the matter and a very clear course of action is required from the chief constable.

"RFJ will be consulting with a number of families over the next few days to see if there might be a role for the Police Ombudsman, as the spectre of collusion is once again raised in relation to murders carried out by the UVF during the early 1990s – this time in east and south Belfast."

A spokesperson for the PSNI said it was matter of consideration for the Historical Enquiries Team (HET).

A spokesperson for HET said yesterday (Monday): "The HET is working through each case chronologically as that is fairest to the families who have waited longest.

"The team does not comment on individual investigations but will look for all relevant information, including open source material, in it's examination of every case."

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