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Drug dealer 'executed by mainstream republicans'

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Sunday, November 25, 2007

By Stephen Breen

A human rights group has raised concerns about the murder of notorious drug lord Brendan 'Speedy' Fegan to Ulster's top cop.

British Irish Rights Watch (BIRW) director Jane Winter (inset) wrote to Sir Hugh Orde after the Real IRA was blamed at the recent inquest into the 1999 killing.

Ms Winter - who has also raised the murder with the Policing Board - claims she received information months after the shooting linking a top Provo to the killing.

The human rights activist believes Fegan's killing is one of many committed by the IRA and loyalist terror groups who declared ceasefires.

Ms Winter is hopeful that Sir Hugh and members of the Policing Board will address her group's concerns about the Fegan killing.

She said: "What worries us is that Brendan Fegan joins a long list of victims whose deaths may have been breaches of the IRA's ceasefire.

"All the paramilitary groups have broken their ceasefires by committing murder during the peace process. There has never been a convenient moment to acknowledge such uncomfortable facts.

"However, while it may well be acceptable for the police to keep silent if they fear attributing a murder to members of any particular group may rock the political boat, this issue brings their competence into question.

"It also damages public confidence in the police. We have written to the PSNI and the Policing Board seeking an explanation."

She also urged former members of the security forces to come forward about their experiences of Special Branch during the Troubles.

"We have so many cases involving collusion at the moment and it's essential for people to come forward.

"I commend the people who have already shared their experiences, but there are more people out there who could help shed some light on this issue. "

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