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## **Responsibility for victims should be removed from OFMDFM**

**03 July 2008**

**Paisley never met with a victims' group in official capacity**

**Statement by TUV MEP Jim Allister**

“For all his fine words about victims being “some of the most vulnerable people in our Province” and being “determined that they should not be left behind”, I am not surprised to have received confirmation from OFMDFM that the former joint First Minister, Dr Paisley, never met with a victims’ group during all his time in office in his official capacity. The reason, of course, is that because the First Minister is politically joined at the hip with McGuinness and unable to do anything officially without him, he couldn’t, as First Minister, meet IRA victims without the assent, or even the presence, of the man who boasted of his IRA leadership position in Londonderry

How could OFMDFM embark on the appointment of a Victims’ Commission without even bothering to officially meet with the sector? The spectacular failure of the Commission to win the approval of victims’ groups – most dramatically demonstrated by the fact that the Department is currently fighting Michelle Williamson in the courts – illustrates that a government office jointly headed by a self-

confessed IRA man is grossly unfitted to represent victims' needs.

**I am calling for victims portfolio to be removed from OFMDFM and given to DFP, which already handles PEACE funding, under which some victims' groups receive aspects of funding. At least there the Minister could officially meet the sector, without IRA/Sinn Fein involvement.**

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