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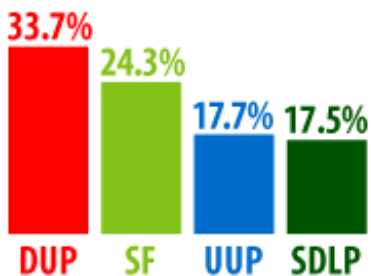
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DONALDSON SECURES SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS FROM PRIME MINISTER

Lagan Valley DUP Member of Parliament Jeffrey Donaldson has today received a commitment from the Prime Minister Tony Blair to provide adequate support for the innocent victims of terrorist violence. Speaking after raising the issue in Prime Minister's Questions in Westminster, Jeffrey Donaldson said,



"Throughout the political process and especially under the Belfast Agreement, the interests and concerns of the innocent victims of terrorist violence were largely ignored. The early release of terrorist killers and the destruction of the Royal Ulster Constabulary in particular rubbed salt into the already open wounds of victims and their loved ones. That's why the DUP has consistently attempted to put the issue of victims to the fore and successfully pressed the Government at St Andrews to make the Victims Commissioner post permanent.

I have today asked the Prime Minister to ensure that there is adequate support and recognition for the innocent victims of terrorist violence in Northern Ireland as we seek to move forward. The interim Victims Commissioner Bertha McDougall is doing excellent work and she has recently published a report which indicates the need to secure long term funding for the victims sector. I am pleased that the Prime Minister was able to give a commitment to provide long term funding for those who have suffered so much and also said that he will look positively at the Victims Commissioner's recommendations for future funding and her suggestions for spending the money more effectively."

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