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DURKAN CALLS FOR END TO 'TIT-FOR-TAT COMMEMORATIONS'

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SDLP Leader and Foyle MP Mark Durkan MLA has called on Sinn Fein and the DUP to cease engaging in tit-for-tat commemorations and address the serious needs of victims.

Mr Durkan urged both parties to show some common sense following the row over plans to hold commemorations for IRA member Mairead Farrell and the SAS in the Long Gallery at Stormont.

He said: “A few weeks ago we heard Sinn Fein and the DUP patronising victims as they explained their approach to the appointment of four commissioners.

“Now we have a situation where the two parties are competing in ghettoising victims as they try to reduce Stormont to a venue of contested and self serving versions of the past.

“The public cannot be impressed when they see on one hand a plan to commemorate a member of the IRA and then witness Jeffrey Donaldson propose a tit-for-tat commemoration to honour the SAS, in what is clearly a point scoring exercise.

“The IRA are paramilitaries regarded as terrorists while the SAS are military people regarded as para-terrorists.

“There are many issues we have to deal with in terms of the past and the needs of victims.

“But it is unacceptable for parties who pretend to care about these issues to now engage in stunt and spat politics.

“If they cannot demonstrate some common sense then they should at least show common decency.

“Furthermore, we must ask ourselves whether an event of this nature is the most appropriate manner to celebrate International Women’s Day.”

ENDS

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