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KELLY: VICTIM'S FAMILIES SHOULD NOT HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN TRUTH AND JUSTICE

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SDLP Victims spokeswoman Dolores Kelly MLA has told the Assembly that she shares the grave reservations across the community regarding the suggestion of a £12,000 ‘recognition payment’ as proposed in the Eames Bradley report.

She said: “There are 31 recommendations contained within the Eames-Bradley Report, each of them merit detailed consideration and reflection. Today’s debate is therefore somewhat premature. We owe it to those who lost their lives, to those who continue to suffer and to our children to make the effort to consider the findings of this distinguished panel as they set out a way to deal with our “troubled past”.

“Whilst their report seeks to challenge all of us both on how we as individuals contributed to the conflict and on how we are going to build a “better and reconciled future”, it fails to robustly challenge those who did the worst and knew the most.

“Justice demands that where prosecutions are possible they must be pursued. The recommendations in this regard merit more detailed scrutiny.

“Truth and justice are not an either or option, families should not be asked to choose. That is simply wrong.

“The needs of victims and survivors must be central in how we deal with the legacy of our past. There are many organised victims groups which do great work but the vast majority do not belong to any.

“Having examined the report, listened to the “voiceless victims” and in recognising that there were many in our community who fought injustice by solely peaceful means and whilst accepting that all mothers’ tears are the same to all. I share the grave reservations across the community regarding the suggestion of a £12000 “recognition payment” and all proposals must be judged against ethical standards of what is right for victims. There simply is no moral equivalence to those who had no choice and those who took up arms.

“We all know that there are those who want to rewrite history; this

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recommendation will be abused by those who seek to blot out their murderous past.”

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