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## 'VICTIMS ARE BEING LET-DOWN BY PAISLEY & MCGUINNESS'

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SDLP Victims Spokesperson Dolores Kelly has hit out at the First and Deputy First Ministers for 'letting down the families of the victims of the troubles' by not appointing a Victims Commissioner.

Mrs Kelly said, "In June, Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness committed to appointing a Victims Commissioner before summer recess of the Northern Ireland Assembly, yet we're now a few days away from the Assembly sitting and we still have no appointment. Many survivors and families of the victims of the troubles rightly feel let down.

"Over the past number of months, we have all been relieved to see politics move forward for all the people of the north of Ireland. But the past has caused much hurt and that needs to be seriously tackled. That hurt cannot be brushed under the carpet.

"There are still many people suffering from the pain of losing their loved ones in the troubles and there are many survivors still searching for truth and justice. The main promise of the Good Friday Agreement was a promise to victims and survivors. To date that promise has not been followed up on.

"The appointment of a Victims Commissioner was meant to spearhead the campaign for dealing with the past and I am outraged that the First and Deputy First Ministers have sat on this issue for so long. Do they not think people have waited long enough, have suffered long enough?

"The core responsibility in dealing with victims issues is the remit of the Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers, and they are failing the very people who have been hurt most by our troubled past. It's time for Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness to stop posing for media photographs and start getting down to delivering on the issues that matter.

"I am calling on the First and Deputy First Minister's to give an explanation for their dithering on appointing a Victims Commissioner. They must announce the appointment as soon as possible so we can start to effectively deal with issues of the past."

Dolores Kelly is tabling an Assembly Question on this issue tomorrow (Monday 3rd September).

ENDS

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