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## KELLY – A SELECTIVE APPROACH TO THE PAST WILL NOT WORK

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SDLP Equality Spokesperson Dolores Kelly MLA has today said that there must not be a selective approach to dealing with the past and that any mechanism must be victim centred and victim and survivor led. Mrs Kelly stated:

“There is a real need for the needs of victims and survivors to be placed at the centre of politics in the North. The main promise of the Agreement was a promise to victims and survivors. To date that promise has not been followed up on. This is something that must be addressed and delivered. There is a clear onus on all those engaged in the troubles, including security forces and paramilitaries to tell all and hold nothing back about their role in our past.

The rights of victims and survivors should not be brushed under the carpet. There is no place for any type of ‘half truth commission’ in the North, be that at the behest of the Government, the security forces, or by paramilitary groups and their political representatives on either side. That will only serve to alienate many victims and survivors and cause more distrust and division. An approach which centres on the needs of all victims and survivors is the only approach which fulfils the promise of the Agreement. That is the approach we need to undertake now. That is why it is disappointing to note that the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister still have not appointed the new Victims Commissioner. We were told that this would be announced before the summer recess. It needs to happen quickly to give a new focus to dealing with the needs of victims. Letting a vacuum form around this issue would be both disrespectful and dangerous. It is time to move forward now.”

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