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Alban Maginness MLA

25th January 2007

MAGINNESS RESPONDS TO VICTIMS COMMISSIONERS REPORT

Commenting on the report from the Interim Victims Commissioner this morning which recommends a new fund for the victims of the troubles, SDLP Justice Spokesperson Alban Maginness stated:

"The SDLP welcomes the Interim Victims Commissioner's recommendation for a new and better compensation fund for the victims of the troubles. This was something that the SDLP raised with the Commissioner in our meetings and correspondence with her. The SDLP has been approached by many victims who have received what can only be described as shameful and insulting compensation. This was particularly true of victims in the 1970s and 80s, many of whom are now old and living in poverty. In any decent society victims are treated with decency. That means better compensation, better treatment and a real acknowledgement of the pain and suffering they have gone through. A figure of £2000 a year does not seem to be enough to make a real difference to many of these victims standard of living. If government is to make a real difference it needs to allocate more money to any fund.

"Increased funding is an important aspect of addressing some of the needs of victims and survivors but it needs to be part of a wider process designed by and designed for them. Until we really put victims and survivors front and centre of a truth and reconciliation process we will not have fulfilled the Agreements promise and society's obligation to them. This should be one of the most important tasks carried out by a devolved administration. It should not be allowed to gather dust on the shelf as people continue to live day by day with the appalling legacy of the troubles."

ENDS

25/01/07