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## MCDONNELL: OMAGH FAMILIES MUST GET GCHQ EVIDENCE

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SDLP Deputy Leader Alasdair McDonnell MP MLA said the British government must ensure that all wiretap evidence on the Omagh bombing collected by the GCHQ spy centre in Cheltenham must be made available for criminal investigations and the civil case being taken by the Omagh families.

Dr McDonnell was speaking at a meeting of the British Irish Parliamentary Body in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The meeting debated a motion calling on the British government to make surveillance and intercept evidence available to the Omagh families.

He said: “The Omagh bombing was an atrocious crime. If you or I had evidence of any ordinary crime, if we withheld it, concealed it or refused to disclose it, we could be prosecuted for aiding and abetting criminals. But this was no ordinary crime. It cries out to the heavens for justice. The families deserve justice and only the truth will bring them justice.

“We cannot tolerate a situation in which evidence is being withheld in our name, in the name of national security. We are not secure while evidence on such a terrible crime is being suppressed. This information could be made available without compromising the integrity of intelligence-gathering – and it must be made available. The mantra of national security cannot be allowed to block all truth for all time.

“It is a matter of great regret that we do not have British government minister here today to explain its blocking policy. Not to justify it, for it cannot be justified.”

The motion, which was proposed by Andrew McKinley (British Labour) and seconded by Brian Hayes (Fine Gael) was passed without a vote.

ENDS

20.10-08

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