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Sinn Féin press Blair on collusion

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A Sinn Féin delegation led by Gerry Adams including Chief Negotiator Martin McGuinness MP, Newry and Armagh MP Conor Murphy, Donegal councillor Pádraig MacLochlainn and Dublin MEP Mary Lou McDonald met with the British Prime Minister Tony Blair in Downing Street.

Speaking after the meeting Mr Adams said:

"We raised the issue of the Irish Language Act with Mr Blair. This is an important issue which needs to be moved ahead. However the majority of this morning's meeting concentrated on the issue of collusion. I sought this meeting after the recent publication of the Police Ombudsman's Report into collusion between the Special Branch and the UVF in North Belfast. Collusion was clearly an integral part of British government policy in Ireland and successive British governments have covered it up.

"I reminded Mr Blair that 10 years ago when we first met him in Downing Street we gave him a file on collusion and in particular the murder of Pat Finucane and the role of British Agent Brian Nelson. This morning I again raised with him the Pat Finucane case. I met with the Finucane family yesterday. They have seen no progress since Weston Park in 2001 when an inquiry was promised and we raised with Mr Blair the issue of Section 19 of the Inquiries Act which would allow for restrictions on the availability of information.

"Conor Murphy, who earlier this week met with Raymond McCord Snr. Raised with Mr Blair the desire of the McCord family to meet with him to discuss the implications of the Police Ombudsman Report. Mr Murphy also raised the activities of the Glenane gang and specifically spoke about the murders of the Reavey family whose brother we met with last week.

"Pádraig MacLochlainn presented Mr Blair with information on the murder of Sinn Féin Councillor Eddie Fullerton in Donegal in 1991 and Mary Lou McDonald presented him with a copy of the Barron Report into the Dublin/Monaghan bombs and other instances of collusion in the 26 counties. Martin McGuinness raised a number of specific cases with the British Prime Minister including party councillors John Davey and Bernard O'Hagan and other related collusion cases in South and East Derry.

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"We challenged Mr Blair especially on the role of the DPP. Four years ago John Stevens sent files on 25 individuals recommending prosecutions at the collusion of his collusion inquiry. Nothing has happened.

"Mr Blair needs to realise that this issue will not go away. It needs to be properly dealt with. Sinn Féin intend to keep this issue at the top of the political agenda. Families who have suffered , whatever their view of what should be done, all want an acknowledgement of this as a British policy and the hurt caused to their families." ENDS

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