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Sinn Féin calls for immediate inquiry into Victims Commissioner appointment

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Sinn Féin Assembly member for North Antrim and party spokesperson on victims issues Philip McGuigan today said that the referral of the case taken by Brenda Downes into Peter Hain's appointment of the interim Victims Commissioner to the British Attorney General, was significant and important given the very serious issues exposed by the case.

Mr McGuigan said:

"The serious issues and abuses of procedure which this case has exposed raise very significant issues for Peter Hain and his department. Since the High Court verdict Peter Hain has attempted to dismiss the court findings and has arrogantly insisted that neither he nor his department have done anything wrong.

"This position is clearly not tenable and the decision by the court to refer the case to the British Attorney General increases the pressure on Mr Hain to face up to the enormity of the situation he finds himself in.

"The case has already exposed the fact that the appointment of Bertha McDougal was a political sop to the DUP and could never command the sort of cross community support required.

"Peter Hain now needs to stop pretending that he has not created a serious problem. He needs to begin to undo some of the damage and hurt he has caused by his approach to this appointment and indeed the British State approach to the issue of victims and the role they have played in the conflict.

"A first step along this road would be for Mr Hain to apologise for his conduct and establish the inquiry demanded by the court into his conduct and that of his department in this case without further delay and for its findings to be made public." ENDS

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