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Victims' Report 'unacceptable'

Published: 25 January, 2007

Sinn Féin General Secretary Mitchel McLaughlin MLA has described the Report published today by Bertha McDougall as 'disappointing' and 'unacceptable'.

Mr McLaughlin said:

"All of the British governments initiatives to date around 'victims' have been geared towards unionists, reinforcing the hierarchy that exists.

"The award of the George Cross to the RUC, the separate and exclusive award of £11million to RUC families, the recent memorial service for the UDR/RIR in the King's Hall, apart from being insulting to their victims, fuels the feelings of Republican/Nationalist victims that no-one is battling for them.

"Bertha McDougall's recommendation that a special fund be established for UDR families underlines the reasons why her appointment was challenged and successfully challenged in the courts.

"There can be no hierarchy of victims. The British Government needs to start acknowledging and taking on board the feelings and sensitivities of the more than one thousand victims of collusion and state violence when dealing with victims' issues.

"There has to be equality of treatment for all victims and survivors and an end to practices that perpetuate and discriminate against victims of state violence and collusion. Nowhere in this report is there any mention of either collusion or an acknowledgement of the corporate responsibility of the British state for, and its role as a primary protagonist in, the conflict.

"There does need to be adequate resourcing and funding by both governments to enable victims' groups to pursue their remits. In that regard we agree with the abolition of the Memorial Fund and more appropriate compensation for people who have suffered bereavement or injury. Sinn Féin also believes that there is a need for international best practice to support the development of special community-based initiatives, including trauma and counselling services." ENDS

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