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## First Minister condemns 'offensive' Troubles cash plan

Tuesday, 27 January 2009

Proposals to pay compensation to all those killed during the Northern Ireland conflict are grossly offensive and will foment community division, the First Minister said today.

Peter Robinson met Northern Ireland Secretary Shaun Woodward to outline opposition to the plans, which make no distinction between the families of paramilitaries and civilians killed.

The Consultative Group on the Past is expected to report tomorrow that £12,000 should be paid to the families of all those killed during the Troubles.

Mr Robinson said: "There can be no equivalence between those who went out with the clear intention of murdering and those men and women who were slaughtered as they went about their daily business.

"The manner in which the consultative group allowed information to be selectively published has also damaged and undermined the totality of its work.

"The issue of victims and dealing with the past is contentious and must be dealt with in a sensitive and sensible way. However, the group's one-size-fits-all approach totally disregards these sensitivities."

The consultative group is co-chaired by former Church of Ireland primate Lord Robin Eames and former Policing Board vice-chairman Denis Bradley.

It is expected to say there should be no hierarchy of victims and everybody should be treated the same.

That would mean the family of IRA Shankill bomber Thomas Begley would receive the same for his death as the relatives of the nine civilians he killed.

Mr Robinson added: "It is abundantly clear that the Eames Bradley report has failed to garner the consensus on dealing with the past which it originally set out to achieve.

"The Secretary of State is now fully aware that the DUP does not consider such an outcome as set out in the Eames Bradley report as offering any basis for dealing with the Troubles from which we have emerged.

"Their approach not only blurs the line between victims and perpetrators but also ignores the tens of thousands who were seriously injured."

Some nationalist victims have said the plan distracts from the real objective of discovering the truth about killings in which security force collusion is alleged, while a unionist relative branded the cash blood money.

Victims Commissioner Mike Nesbitt said the money was likely to divide families.

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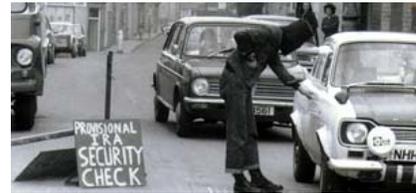
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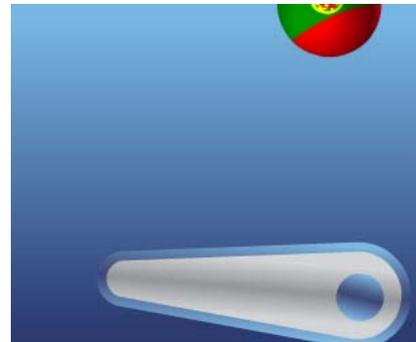
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I can see why this would make people angry, but it really has to be all or nothing - trying to draw a line between those whose families deserve compensation and those that don't would be impossible.

For example, what about a paramilitary whose death was nothing to do with their terrorist connections? What about someone who was connected to, but not actually in, a paramilitary group (for example Sinn Fein or a loyalist prisoners supporters group)? What about a police officer or prison guard who committed some act of brutality? What about someone who might have been in a terrorist group but might not? What about someone who had been in a terrorist group and then renounced it before being killed?

There are clearly some totally innocent victims and some who the world is definitely better off without. But there are also a huge number on both sides in a grey area in between and there is no way everyone will agree which side they should be on. All families should be compensated or none.

*Posted by Helen | 28.01.09, 06:20 GMT* [Complain about this comment](#)

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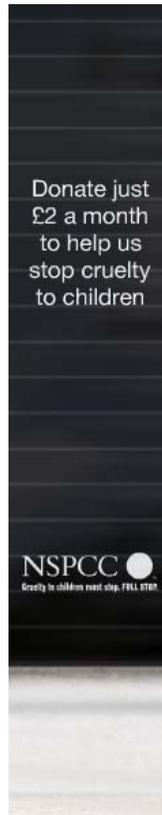
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