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Local & National

SF leaders deny IRA murder link

Gerry Adams condemns killing of Co Armagh man, as 10 ex-Provos are key suspects

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

By Victoria O'Hara

Sinn Fein leaders have continued to deny republican involvement in the brutal murder of a Co Armagh man - despite Garda sources claiming that 10 ex-Provisionals are now key suspects.

As Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams (above) condemned the beating of Paul Quinn (21), unionists issued warnings about the political implications for the Stormont Assembly if a link to the IRA was established.

First Minister and DUP leader the Rev Ian Paisley - who raised the issue with Prime Minister Gordon Brown yesterday - said if the murder was the work of the Provisional IRA then "very serious consequences will flow from that".

Mr Quinn's family believe he was lured from Cullyhanna across the border by members of the Provisional movement and beaten to death following a dispute with republicans from south Armagh. Their suspicions are backed by former Sinn Fein politician Jim McAllister, who said: "Not only the family, but the whole community think the IRA carried it out. Those that doubt it are those that are being told to doubt it, and who would believe whatever they're told."

But Mr Adams insisted: "There's no republican involvement whatsoever in this man's murder - and all of us should be careful that we don't end up playing politics with what is a dreadful, criminal action."

Meanwhile, Mr Paisley said he encouraged everyone to wait for the findings of the police, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic. He said: "As a party we have made it clear that there will be no place in government for those associated with murder."

"There will be no fudging of this issue and everyone must work to ensure that those responsible for such a callous murder are exposed and brought to justice."

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Senior police officers in the Republic confirmed last night that the ex-Provisionals remained the prime suspects.

Gardai think the gang of 15 men had not intended to actually kill Mr Quinn when they set upon him with iron bars and cudgels in a Co Monaghan shed on Saturday evening, but had gone too far.

The southern police are working on the theory that the beating was connected to two previous incidents in which Mr Quinn clashed with a republican and another republican's son.

Mr McAllister, a neighbour of the victim's family in Cullyhanna, claimed Mr Quinn had received two threats and had been told by a woman, who called to his home prior to the attack, that he would "end up in a black bag" .

PSNI chief constable Sir Hugh Orde has briefed Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness. A spokesman for Mr McGuinness said: "The Deputy First Minister is certain that there was no political involvement in the murder of Paul Quinn.

"He is absolutely certain that no republicans were involved in this dreadful murder."

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