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## Too much focus on money, says RFJ

Andersonstown News Monday 27th of January 2009

THE DIRECTOR of Relatives for Justice says too much focus has been put on compensation for those killed during the Troubles, after controversial plans were revealed to pay compensation to their families.

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Mark Thompson was speaking after it was suggested families would receive the same amount – £12,000 – regardless of whether their relative was a member of a paramilitary group, security forces or a civilian.

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It is believed the Consultative Group on the Past, chaired by Lord Eames and Denis Bradley, will make the recommendation in its report, due to be published this Wednesday.

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Mr Thompson said there can be no price put on truth and justice.

**BAVARIAN**

"As we collectively attempt to find an agreed way forward in terms of a truth recovery process, the singular focus on the money is not helpful to achieving that aim," he said.

**Lindsay Boucher**

"Reparations should come at the end of a process of truth recovery focusing on individual acts of human rights violations, patterns of abuse and the nature and causes of the conflict.

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"To address reparations in this way would avoid the type of hysterical reactions, especially from unionists, concerning who should receive the money."

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Mr Thompson said an independent truth process was now needed.

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"That will allow us to see a more accurate narrative of the conflict. If we fully apply the unionist logic, the families of RUC and British army members would also not be entitled to anything, given their roles in collusion and shoot-to-kill.

"Essentially, this is a nothing argument and a distraction from the core focus of the truth."

Marion Walsh, whose 17-year-old son Damien was shot dead by a UDA gunman at the Dairy Farm shopping centre in 1993, said the £12,000 payout is a "paltry sum" and that her main concern is the possibility that a truth commission could take over investigations from the Police Ombudsman and the Historical Enquiries Team (HET).

"It seems to me £12,000 is just crumbs from the table to shut people up. Many of the people who lost someone in the Troubles live on benefits and sickness benefits because of what happened to them. This will do them for a while but it's not going to last people very long.

"But my big issue is that they are talking about doing away with the Police Ombudsman and HET. In my son's case I have just started to get somewhere with the HET and now it might be scrapped.

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## Belfast's next generation of leaders...

## Nominations now open for 2009 40 Under 40

American congressman turned university chancellor, Marty Meehan, will be the guest speaker at this year's Belfast Media Group Belfast Top 40 Under 40 in association with Sainsbury's. Nominations are now open for this year's Sainsbury's sponsored Top 40 Under 40.



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"All the cases will be set back by being handed over to a new team while the people who are responsible for it all get away with it."

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Marion said she approves of the idea of all those killed over the years being paid the same amount.

"I can understand why some people would be angry but I believe many of the people wouldn't have got themselves into those situations if this country had been run better.

"To me the fault lies at the door of the British state."

Paul Teggart, whose father Danny was shot 14 times in the Ballymurphy Massacre in 1971, said the suggested pay-out is an insult to the memory of victims

"I would class the £12,000 as an insult to the memory of our loved ones. There is no price you can put on someone's life.

"Money has never been part of our campaign, our campaign is for truth and justice and the acknowledgment that our victims were innocent people.

"Compensation has never been an issue to us and this offer is an insult," added Paul.

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