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Dolores Kelly MLA



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KELLY: EXTEND O'LOAN INQUIRY TO ROBB/MCILWAINE

SDLP Upper Bann MLA Dolores Kelly said the Police Ombudsman's investigation of Special Branch collusion should be extended to cover the murders of Andrew Robb and David McIlwaine and the long killing spree of Billy Wright and his LVF gang.

She said: "The conclusions of the Ombudsman's report on Ronnie Flanagan's time at the head of Special Branch and the RUC are absolutely damning, but it doesn't stop at a few bad apples in one barracks in Belfast. The whole list of murders stinks to high heaven of parallels with the Robb/McIlwaine murders in Tandragee.

"Police handling of this murder inquiry urgently requires scrutiny, but the McIlwaine family is clearly convinced that a UVF informer was being protected and continues to be protected. It has always been a mystery how loyalist killers in the Lurgan-Portadown area, and indeed throughout the Murder Triangle, were able to operate with impunity year after year.

"The puppet-masters who pulled the strings and sent out well-paid killers into our community are now enjoying fat pensions at our expense. They should be charged, at the very least with perverting the course of justice. The NIO ministers who gave them a nod and a wink must be held to account."

BRADLEY: O'LOAN INVESTIGATION SHOULD EXTEND ACROSS NORTH

SDLP Newry and Armagh MLA Dominic Bradley said Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan's investigation into Special Branch control of loyalist killer gangs should be extended across the north.

He said: "It will come as no surprise to many nationalists to see it confirmed that RUC Special Branch ran a serial killer in North Belfast and paid him £80,000 of taxpayers' money. But this was no little local problem in one Belfast barracks. The Special Branch operated on a centralised structure, so the same senior officers who signed the money orders for Mark Haddock controlled other agents across the north.

"We know that the Glennane Gang which murdered the Reaveys operated with RUC and UDR help and participation in the 1970s, and we know that Special Branch was still running killers in the 1990s and into this century. Without waiting for specific complaints, the Ombudsman should review all murders by loyalist gangs across the north to see what links to the police might exist.

"It is predictable, but nevertheless disappointing, that unionists like Jeffrey Donaldson and Ken Maginness spring to the defence of the killer gang paymasters rather than their victims.

In the face of incontrovertible facts, all they can do is fall back on the old Provo defence that this was war and terrible things happen in war. The answer to them should be the same: crimes committed in a war are war crimes and should be tried as such."

ENDS

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