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McDougal judgement - indictment of Hain and NIO

Published: 9 November, 2006

Commenting after Brenda Downes won her Judicial Review against the appointment of Bertha McDougal as interim Victims Commissioner, Sinn Féin spokesperson on Truth issues Philip McGuigan said that verdict was an indictment on Peter Hain and the NIO and the way in which they went about public appointments.

Mr McGuigan said:

"Today's verdict is not in itself about Bertha McDougal. It is about the way in which Peter Hain and the NIO approached the job of appointing someone to this crucial public position.

"If victims of the conflict are to have confidence in a Victims Commissioner then people have to be confident that their appointment was free from political intervention and not part of some wider game being played by the NIO. This clearly was not the case in this instance and the court has found in favour of Brenda Downes in every legal point she argued.

"Any future Victims Commissioner will need to make it clear that there can be no hierarchy of victims which has for so long been the approach of the British State to these matters.

"What is now crucial is that the British Government take note of today's damning judgement and take immediate action to ensure that the appointment of the permanent Commissioner is lawful and transparent everything which their last appointment was not." ENDS

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