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"South Armagh is at a Crossroads" - Kenny Donaldson

[E-mail to a friend](#) *October 28th, 2007 Kenny Donaldson*

Kenny Donaldson, an Ulster Unionist Party Officer and resident of Crossmaglen, South Armagh has given his reaction to recent events where, 21-year-old Paul Quinn of Cullyhanna was brutally beaten and consequently murdered by a gang of masked men at a disused farm-house in Oram, County Monaghan.

As well as the Oram incident, on Tuesday night last, news reports confirmed that an 18-year-old lad was battered by a gang of up to seven men at Carnegat, Newry.

In a statement, Kenny said: "I would firstly express my sincere condolences to the family circle of Paul Quinn and to the other families whose loved ones were left hospitalised following the brutal attacks they suffered at the hands of gangs of masked men.

"The shock-waves of what has happened in recent days is reverberating, people thought that the days of Kangaroo-style courts were over and that Northern Ireland and indeed the South Armagh area had finally, entered a new political and societal era.

"As a proud Crossmaglen and South Armaghman, I am angered that the area to which I love has once again been placed in the limelight for the wrong reasons. South Armagh has been described as 'Bandit Country' and was seen as such by large numbers of people, from both sides of our historic divide and from beyond these Shores. Many terrible atrocities occurred in this community over the 'Troubled Years.'

But in recent times the area has made the news for the right reasons, the local economy is growing, tourism numbers are increasing and there appeared to be, a new resolve amongst the local community to move this area of Northern Ireland forward.

"Wakening up to the news on Sunday and then Wednesday morning last, that once again; self-appointed dictators had reaped their own brand of Kangaroo Justice upon young men was deeply distressing for me and yet I have no comprehension of how much worse it would have felt for the family and friends of the deceased and the injured.

Kenny added: "There is much loose talk that the deceased and the injured were guilty of crimes, irrespective of whether or not that is true; no-one has the right to take life through their own brand of 'barbaric Justice.'

"I am calling on the broad, law-abiding South Armagh community to speak with one voice in declaring that we do not want Kangaroo Courts where self-appointed dictators perform the role of, Judge, Jury and Executioner. While belatedly, the Republican Movement have given their political representatives in Sinn Fein the 'green light' to endorse and support the fundamental rule of law and order, covering support for the Police (PSNI) the Courts and all other aspects of the Criminal Justice System.

"Refusal to adhere to law and order systems can no longer be appeased. I believe that the vast majority of South Armagh people are committed to the future and of building a fair, just, safe and stable community. I appeal with these people to send a message to the criminals and mafia-style dictators within their midst - get off the community's back, end your smuggling, (whether fuel or otherwise)

cease your extortion rackets, end your barbarism and violence and remove your stranglehold from the community and earn your living, instead of stealing from others.

"The community must come forward and support the PSNI and Garda's efforts at bringing those responsible for the death of Paul Quinn to justice.

"I would also appeal for calm in the South Armagh area. Now is a time for reflection, South Armagh is at a cross-roads and good must prevail, people must consign from within their midst, the evil that has plagued this area and its' people.

"In the early – mid nineties and thereafter, terrorism has been all but banished from our Country, now is the time to give the boot to criminality and any lingering trappings of paramilitarism also."

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