

## Local Victims Group Call For O'Loan's Resignation

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Rathfriland based Victims Support Group, South Down Action for Healing Wounds, has called for the immediate resignation of the Police Ombudsman's Naula O'Loan, following her report last week.

A spokesperson for the organisation said,

"It is with utter disgust and outrage that we are speaking out against this Police Ombudsman's Report presented by Mrs Naula O'Loan. We are, as are many, totally outraged at the recent onslaught against the name of the Royal Ulster Constabulary GC.

We feel that the RUC are being made into villains when many sacrificed their very lives for the safety of EVERYONE in Northern Ireland.

This report is nothing short of a witch-hunt amongst former RUC officers. The RUC was honoured by being presented with the George Cross as recognition of their courage, bravery and sacrifice throughout the Troubles. Was their fight against the barbaric slaughter of the people of Northern Ireland by ALL paramilitaries in vain. Or is this an attempt by Mrs O'Loans office to try and discredit all the former members of RUC GC?"

The spokesperson went on to say,

"Mrs O'Loan was given 10,000 items of police documentation during her investigation with the full co-operation of the police; this obviously shows competence on the RUC's part. As for those officers that chose to remain silent, surely that is their civil right after all they are not on trial and talking about those times may be just too painful for them. What does 'reliable and probably true' mean? The word probably contradicts the term reliable. Something is not fact unless you have the actual evidence to back it up."

Victims of terrorist violence are never free from the pain and suffering that they had inflicted upon them. As a support group we try to help our members to re-build their lives, come to terms with their suffering if that is possible, and try to move forward as a group. Reports such as this only re opens wounds and re-victimises those that have suffered at the hands of terrorist violence.

To add further insult to injury we hear that this report may be discussed in the Assembly next week. No doubt this will turn into a verbal battlefield, being used for their own, individual, political agendas. Politicians have got to understand that they are talking about people's lives and should not use victims issues as some kind of political soap box.

Victim's emotions are being bombarded with political rhetoric in order to gain votes. Victims are real people with raw emotions of pain, anger and heartache, who are expected to put all their

experiences behind them because the Government says they should. Victims and their families need time, patience and understanding to heal their wounds, if healing is possible not pushed and bullied into moving on.

In closing the spokesperson said,

“The sheer one-sidedness of this report shows that the investigation was not conducted with an open and balanced attitude and therefore we believe that Mrs Naula O’Loan should step down from her position within the Police Ombudsman as it is obvious to all that she is incapable of being impartial.”