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Troubles murder probes cost hits new high

£7.6 was spent last year

The cost of re-opening Northern Ireland's conflict murders has reached a three-year high, it was revealed today.

A total of £7.6m was spent last year by detectives probing over 3,000 unsolved killings.

Advocates of the police team argued that it is relatively cheap compared to £242m spent on four public inquiries into controversial deaths. However, south Armagh victims' campaigner Willie Frazer said: "People are talking about us moving on but unless we get some sort of answers from this Historical Enquiries Team (HET) we won't do that."

"People are talking about what has been spent and what has been spent on the public inquiries.

"There are serious differences in the amount of money being spent and it makes us feel like second class citizens."

The HET was set up to consider whether fresh leads could be found in 3,268 cases.

The cost was revealed following a written question in Westminster from Gregory Campbell from the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists.

It said £182m had been devoted to the Bloody Sunday Inquiry into the shooting dead of 14 civil rights protestors in Londonderry by British soldiers in January 1972.




A total of £14m has been spent on the Robert Hamill public investigation, after the Catholic, 25, was beaten to death by a loyalist mob in 1997 while police allegedly failed to act.

Northern Ireland Secretary Shaun Woodward said £24m had been used for the Rosemary Nelson investigation after the Catholic lawyer, 40, died after loyalists planted a booby-trap bomb underneath her car outside her Lurgan home in March 1999.

Lawyers are probing alleged security force collusion.

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The Billy Wright Inquiry has cost £21m after the 37-year-old loyalist was shot dead by republican splinter group the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) in the Maze Prison in December 1997.

Many victims have supported the processes as a valuable method of closure but others have questioned whether people will be brought to justice.

A spokesman for the Retired Police Officers` Association said: *"We understand that people need closure on the past and that comes best if there is justice for the families but there`s no indication that that will be the outcome of all of these inquiries and we have to have a pragmatic look at the sheer cost and the amount of time it is taking.*

"We think there must be a better way of doing this.


"The cost of investigating the past is impacting on the cost of current policing." Head of the HET Dave Cox said for the families who had lost loved ones the matter was still a current one."

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