



2 comments  
 THURSDAY  
 05/07/2007  
 14:30:20

**Orde in Troubles probe warning**

Inquiries into Northern Ireland's troubled past are posing a major threat to the police force's current crime-fighting capabilities, the chief constable warned today.

Sir Hugh Orde revealed more than £14 million of his budget this year will be spent on meeting the demands of fresh probes into controversial murders and unsolved killings spanning more than three decades.

He has 288 staff searching for files, records and involved in all other work emerging from a raft of tribunals and investigations set up in a bid to reach closure.

But Sir Hugh told a meeting of his Policing Board in Belfast: "This is one of the biggest threats to delivering our commitment to current policing, how we deal with the past."

The amount of money being ploughed into meeting the demands was the equivalent of significant staffing levels, the Chief Constable stressed.

"That`s about 250 extra police officers," he said.

"It would pay for my six assistant chief constables round this table for the next 14 years."

One of the inquiries is examining alleged security force collusion in the murder of solicitor Rosemary Nelson, who was blown up by a loyalist paramilitary bomb planted under her car in Lurgan, Co Armagh in 1999.

**CLICK SILVER BROADBAND**

HIGH SPEED INTERNET ACCESS **ALWAYS ON**

- Download large files faster than ordinary dial-up
- Your phone line is free to make/receive calls
- Wireless routers give you access anywhere in your home

- Glasgow suspect was QUB student
- Man injured in Dublin shooting
- Countdown to Oxegen 2007
- Galway plane crash victims named
- 13:00 Ahern gets Mahon Tribunal date
- 12:20 Armagh couple pay ARA £200k
- 12:06 Man's body found in Belfast hotel
- 11:36 Weather delays Dublin regatta
- 10:42 Pair held in Spain over Cork haul
- 09:46 Three held after Kildare drugs find
- 09:39 Development for Falls Rd barracks
- 08:38 Fraud and blunders costing £151m
- 08:30 Co Limerick road victim named
- 08:04 Man stabbed in Co Down wine bar
- Five held in Carrick attack probe
- Man critical after Dublin shooting
- 110 children rescued from Irish sea
- Ministers to consider UDA funding
- Three jailed after Co Down attack
- MLAs face rates lobby
- Orde in Troubles probe warning
- Ten injured at Dublin museum
- Arsonists blamed for £100k blaze
- SDLP top election spending poll
- Belfast Port project to cost £630m

**YOUR COMMENTS**

- Maddy dad flies home to UK  
85 comments
- NI faces terrorist threat  
8 comments
- Suicide pact fears in Co Armagh  
6 comments

**CLICK SILVER BROADBAND**

SPEEDS NOW UP TO **8MB\***

**FROM ONLY** **€5.99 NI**

**€9.99 ROI**

**ALSO**

WIRELESS ROUTER OPTION AVAILABLE

Migrating Customers receive **FREE broadband** for a month

**NEW**

**UTV TALK PEAK PACKAGE NOW AVAILABLE**

\* NI only

That has already cost £30 million, split equally between the police probe and public hearings, Sir Hugh confirmed.

And amid the spending this year alone, £7.3 million was being directed at the Historical Enquiries Team (HET) set up to re-examine more than 2,000 unsolved killings during the Troubles.

Although work has already started on a quarter of those cases, with 40 more beginning every month, Sir Hugh predicted it would take another five years to complete.

Officers assigned to all of these duties face trawling through out-dated storage systems right across the police estate. So far they have located more than 8,000 exhibits in searches of 32 locations.

At one store in Belfast two officers have already spent 16 weeks checking 18,000 files, with a further two months searching in front of them.

Intelligence systems has posed another headache as police go back through databases for references to various sources.

Billy "King Rat" Wright, the infamous loyalist terror boss whose shooting inside the Maze Prison is the subject of one of the inquiries, was used to illustrate the complexities of the task.

The police system includes 41 variations on references to Wright alone - whether through different spellings, typing errors or nicknames, Sir Hugh told the board.

His force has sent 23,500 documents to the Wright inquiry, and another 6,500 to the Nelson tribunal.

In a further demonstration of the volumes involved, the Chief Constable said Lord Stevens' marathon probe into security force collusion with loyalist killers ran to 1.9 million pages of information, weighing 20 tonnes.

Despite stressing his officers would do everything required of them, he added: "There's continual demand on a small number of people to do this work.

"These are people I need to look at current threats as well as the past. This is niche market material."

Sir Hugh suggested a more holistic approach, where investigations are combined with some kind of truth and reconciliation processes, could be the way forward.

His warnings on dealing with the past provoked tense exchanges between unionists and the new republican representatives on the authority in a meeting dominated by questions on collusion and alleged past security force misdemeanours.

Sinn Fein's Alex Maskey confronted Sir Hugh, claiming the police service has yet to comply with legal obligations to reveal what went on.

Mr Maskey told him: "It`s a very substantial and fundamental flaw in your own argument."

But Democratic Unionist member Jeffrey Donaldson countered by stressing that former paramilitaries should also play their part in any healing process.

The Lagan Valley MP said: "It`s not appropriate for those involved in paramilitary organisations who are brought to give evidence to inquiries to then shelter behind some code when they were members of that organisation and withhold evidence."

His party colleague, David Simpson, also warned Sir Hugh it was impossible to move on until the past is finally dealt with.

"I count myself as a victim of the problems there has been in Northern Ireland, losing four of my family over the past number of years through terrorism the Provisional IRA carried out on security force members," the Upper Bann MP said.

"I would like your assurance that whatever names come up, whether they are in private business or masquerading as politicians today that no one is above the law."

 [E-mail this story to a friend](#)

[Post your comment](#)



COMMENT TRACKER:  
**LOGIN** to track comments on this story

 2 comment(s)

 [post your comment](#)

On 5 Jul at 18:26 - Pearse from Michigan said:

There is no price on the truth being told.

On 6 Jul at 09:25 - OBSERVER from NW said:

"When those who enforce the law are above the law, there is no law". Those who like to go on about the "Rule of Law" should begin their trek towards legitimacy by fully investigating criminality and collusion accusations.

ENTERTAINMENT LISTINGS

Content provided by entertainment.ie

FILM: MOLIERE

DIRECTOR: Laurent Triad.

STARRING: Romain Duris, Laura Morante, Fabrice Luchini, Edouard Baer.

DETAILS: France 120mins (PG)

RATING: ★★☆☆☆

ALL REVIEWS

NOW SHOWING AT...

Select from the following:

FIND

GIGS  
Acoustic Session...

THEATRE  
Mushroom...

COMEDY  
Funday Monday Comedy Club...

CLUBBING  
Renaissance Night Club...

FESTIVAL  
D.O.D. Festival...

VOTING POLL

What should happen with the planned national stadium for Northern Ireland?

- Build it at the Maze
- Build it elsewhere
- Spend money differently

VOTE NOW!

Post a comment [ 6 comments so far ]

SEARCH ARCHIVES

Browse through the online news, sport and entertainment archives.

BROWSE

Enter a keyword above and select the newsroom section to search.

UTV NEWS ON AIR

Watch the latest on-air news bulletins.

Select the quality of your version depending on your internet connection

LOW

HIGH

Click below to browse through the archives of online streaming news.

BROWSE HERE