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**Policing the past**

THURSDAY  
06/03/2008  
15:51:41

**PSNI drained by public inquiries**

Public inquiries and inquests into contentious deaths during Northern Ireland's violent past are taking much-needed police resources away from

tackling current crime, the province's police chief said today.

Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde said: "In stark terms, the budget we designed and bid for to deal with policing the present day, to a substantial extent, is being consumed by policing the past."

He said the PSNI is having to deal with the legacy of three decades of community strife and expectations are high. Massive amounts of police file documents spanning decades are having to be trawled by police for the benefit of public inquiries and more than 100 inquests are due to be held.

Time and resources are being consumed as police sift through the files because many are security sensitive.

The chief constable, addressing a public meeting of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, said he is obliged to provide the material requested and will do so but added: "Demand is driven from the outside. It is outside my control."

He "confidently and regretfully" predicted that demand on the budget in the next three years will increase but added that this will also be outside his control.

The PSNI is facing a shortfall of about £100 million between what it wants for policing over the next three years and what it has been allocated by the Treasury.

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Sir Hugh is meeting the Policing Board in private today to pin down just where the money will be spent and where savings should be made.

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**DIRECTOR:** Paul Andrew Williams

**STARRING:** Andy Serkis, Reece Shearsmith, Jennifer Ellison

**DETAILS:** UK / TBC (16)

**RATING:** ★★☆☆☆

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