



Dermot Ahern

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### Dermot Ahern to raise collusion issue

The Irish government will raise fresh allegations of collusion involving British security forces in Northern Ireland in the 1970s when it meets top British officials in London tomorrow.

By: Press Association

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Irish Foreign Affairs Minister Dermot Ahern is expected to demand full co-operation from Prime Minister Tony Blair`s administration into ongoing inquiries by the Dail parliament, at the British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference (BIIGC).

An Irish parliamentary committee found widespread collusion between security forces and loyalist paramilitaries in three 1970s atrocities that claimed 18 lives.

They included the Miami Showband massacre and the bombing of Kay`s Tavern in Dundalk and the Three Star Inn in Castleblaney, County Monaghan.

Speaking ahead of tomorrow`s high-level meeting between British and Irish politicians, Mr Ahern said:

"It is absolutely essential the British government co-operate fully with investigations into allegations of British collusion in loyalist attacks during the mid-1970s.

"Its findings are stark and deeply troubling. The issues must be fully investigated. There is no doubt there was collusion."

Secretary of State Peter Hain and Northern Ireland Office ministers will also attend tomorrow`s BIIGC meeting.

Mr Ahern said that he spoke by telephone with Mr Hain after the publication of the Oireachtas Justice Committee reports on November 29

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and the Secretary of State indicated the British Government would offer every possible co-operation.

"I stressed at the time the importance of full and unfettered British cooperation with the ongoing investigations and enquiries into these matters, as the government has consistently made clear to the British Government," Mr Ahern said.

Taoiseach Bertie Ahern also raised the issue at length with Mr Blair in London last week.

The hard-hitting Oireachtas Justice Committee reports claimed people employed by the British authorities to preserve peace and protect people were "engaged in the creation of violence and the butchering of innocent victims."

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