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Collins' widow at court

FRIDAY  
26/10/2007  
13:07:12

### Inquest into Eamon Collins' death

The murderers of a former IRA super-grass, stabbed to death in a frenzied knife attack, were branded "sub-human thugs" by a coroner today.

The killing of Eamon Collins was one of the most brutal Northern Ireland`s chief coroner John Leckey had ever come across, he said.

The former IRA man was beaten and stabbed to death in January 1999 while walking his dogs near his home in the Co Down border city of Newry. The inquest into his death, in Newry, was told police believed members of the south Armagh battalion of the Provisional IRA were responsible.

Several men were arrested and questioned, but none charged.

Collins, a former IRA intelligence officer, owned up to his reign of terror in a book, Killing Rage.

He feared for his life after becoming an informer and giving evidence that convicted a number of IRA men during the 1980s.

He fled Newry but returned years later when the IRA offered a post-ceasefire amnesty to informers if they made a public retraction of their evidence.

The murdered man`s widow, Bernardette, told the inquest they suffered harassment and experienced difficulties after returning to Newry. On one occasion, she said, their house was burnt down.

When she was asked whether she believed the IRA was responsible for her husband`s murder, she said: "I do believe they were from a

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republican background, but I can't say any more."

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