



Lord Eames

FRIDAY
29/02/2008
08:20:41

Group clarifies Stevens position

A group looking into Northern Ireland's past has not seen the unpublished reports of a team of detectives who probed security force collusion with loyalist paramilitaries, it has emerged.

The Consultative Group on the Past, which was set up last year to examine how Northern Ireland should deal with its past, revealed it spent four days with the Stevens Team discussing a wide range of issues but did not seek access to any of its reports.

The group was responding to concerns about its work which were raised at a public meeting last night in west Belfast by Seamus Finucane, the brother of murdered Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane. Pat Finucane's 1989 shooting by loyalists was the focus of an investigation into collusion headed by former Metropolitan Police chief Sir John Stevens.

Seamus Finucane spoke last night at a meeting of the West Belfast District Policing Partnership.

During a robust public meeting with local police commanders, he and other audience members demanded Assistant Chief Constable Alistair Finlay appear at their next meeting. Mr Finucane said he had a number of concerns.

"I would like members of this body to know that members of our forum have recently met the Consultative Group on the Past and they were clearly told they had access to the Stevens Report and they were both alarmed and disturbed by what they had seen," he said.

"This reinforces our belief that the Stevens Report should be published as it is in the public interest to know what happened in the murders of our loved ones by the British state and its Crown forces.

"As to the confidence in the Assistant Chief Constable, I will leave you to judge for yourselves. We have nothing to hide as families of the victims.

"All we are asking for is the truth and this goes to the heart and the confidence of policing and justice in the future. I think the answers of the Assistant Chief Constable leave a lot to be desired."

However in a statement today the consultative group co-chaired by ex-Church of Ireland Primate Lord Eames and former vice chairman of the Northern Ireland Policing Board Denis Bradley said it had detailed discussions with the Stevens team who fully answered all their queries.

"The group spent four days with the Stevens Team and discussed a wide range of issues concerning their work," they said.

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"Any questions asked by the group were fully answered. The group did not request access to any specific report."

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