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Families in plea over Sunday report

By Brendan McDavid
Monday, 2 February 2009

The families of those killed on Bloody Sunday are to seek legal advice to ensure they receive Lord Saville's Inquiry report at the same time as the Secretary of State Shaun Woodward.

SDLP Justice spokesman Alban Maginness and Sinn Fein MEP Bairbre de Brun echoed the sentiments of the Bloody Sunday families at the rally following the 37th anniversary march yesterday.

Thousands gathered in Creggan yesterday afternoon to follow the traditional route to the Bogside ahead of a speech by Jean Hegarty, whose brother Kevin McElhinney was one of those killed. A sea of Palestinian flags were distributed among marchers in a show of solidarity with the people of Gaza.

This year the march came to a standstill at William Street, at the point where the original march was stopped on its way to the Guildhall, and the names of the dead were read out by local journalist JulieAnn Campbell, the niece of Jackie Duddy.

Lord Saville's report is expected to be published this autumn — more than a decade after the inquiry was announced. It is due to be delivered to Mr Woodward before it is given to the families and made public.

John Kelly, whose brother Michael was one of those killed, said it was only right the families were given their opportunity to dissect it properly.

Speaking at the march, Ms DeBrun warned that "justice delayed is justice denied".

North Belfast MLA Mr Maginness, who was on the original march, said the Saville Report will be measured against a standard of full truth and justice.

He said: "I want to pay tribute to the Bloody Sunday Committee who have never given up in their quest for justice in the face of provocation, prevarication. With inspiring determination, they have stood steadfast for full truth and justice and have asked for nothing more. They will accept nothing less and that is the only standard against which the Saville Report will be — or should be — measured.

"I was on the march on Bloody Sunday and will never forget the fear on the streets of Derry as the British Army carried out their massacre.

"I will never forget the deep shock in the immediate aftermath and in the days and weeks that followed or my utter despair and devastation as I returned home that night.

"That was a defining time in my life and I know that Bloody Sunday defined many other lives too."

He added: "We hope and pray that your long campaign is nearing its end. We say unambiguously that there must be no more delays. This must be the year in which the Saville Report is published — and seen first by the families, not just the British Government and their lawyers."

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This is the single biggest disgrace in the history of the North. How could the people ever trust or accept the British Government, when they can't even bring justice for the mindless slaughter of innocent people on the streets of Derry.

And what does the British government give their murderous soldiers for killing children in Derry? A free pass and anonymity perhaps? Absolutely disgusting.

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