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Friday, January 11, 2008

By Brendan McDaid

The Bloody Sunday Tribunal may reveal its findings as early as May, the brother of one of those killed has said.

John Kelly said the families have now received a letter from the Saville Tribunal informing them that the full report and conclusions are likely to be brought before the House of Commons within months, most likely May or June.

The report will be proof-read and prepared for publication before being passed to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Shaun Woodward.

Mr Kelly, whose brother Michael was one of 13 unarmed civilians killed by paratroopers in the Bogside on January 30, 1972, said he hoped the families will be given the report as soon as possible. He said: "We got the letter from the inquiry informing us the report will be finished within several months.

"We have also been told that the report will be voluminous - not like the 120-page Widgery Report.

"Because it will be voluminous, I would hope that we will be given plenty of time to look at it and have a response to it."

The Bloody Sunday Inquiry was set up by Tony Blair in 1998 and took six years, with 432 days of oral testimony.

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Approximately 2,500 witness statements have been received and a further 121 audiotapes and 110 videotapes have also been studied.

Mr Kelly said he believed the inquiry has taken so long because of the vast amount of evidence that has had to be analysed.

"It is a lengthy process but you have got to take into account that there were 920 witnesses and 1,500 other statements as well.

"There was roughly 25 million words spoken - it is a really enormous Inquiry that was never going to deliver in a few months."

He added: "I think Saville is his own man and other family members feel the same way.

"At times you can get really frustrated.

"But it has been 36 years at the end of this month and we are prepared to wait as long as it takes."

A spokeswoman for the inquiry said it was "very difficult" to predict when the inquiry's findings will be concluded and made public.

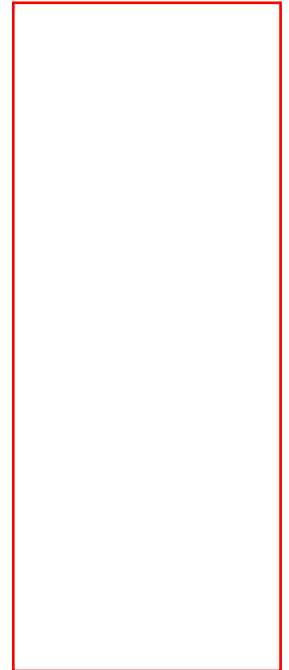
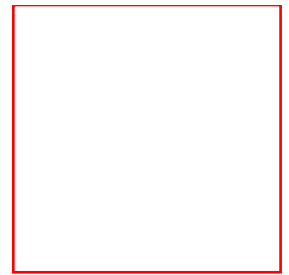
Meanwhile the body tasked with finding a way to deal with the legacy of the Troubles will hold the next in a series of public meetings in Londonderry next week.

The Consultative Group on the Past - co-chaired by Derry man Denis Bradley and the former Church of Ireland primate Lord Robin Eames - will hold its second public discussion at St Columb's Park House, Limavady Road on Tuesday, January 15 from 7 - 9pm.

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