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Troubles relative's hunger strike

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Fury at Eames-Bradley

Friday, January 25, 2008

By Brendan McDaid

A man whose brother was shot dead during Operation Motorman has begun a hunger strike in protest over the treatment of families bereaved during the Troubles.

Londonderry man Danny Bradley said he was prepared to die unless measures were taken to ensure transparency and accountability were implemented as part of a truth commission.

He also called for proper compensation to be paid directly to families affected for the suffering over the past four decades.

The 51-year-old's brother Seamus was one of two teenage boys shot and killed by soldiers in July 1972, after the Army invaded Derry's No Go areas during Operation Motorman. The 19-year-old was unarmed when he was shot in Bishop's Field in Creggan.

The PSNI's Historical Enquiries Team has confirmed it will review Mr Bradley's death "in the near future".

But he criticised the Consultative Group on the Past's current consultation on the Troubles, saying it did not go far or deep enough to satisfy the families of all those killed.

Mr Bradley said questions remained unanswered over his brother's death and those of thousands of others killed during the Troubles. He said: "What I want is for the British government to take responsibility for what they did to my family - those who sent the troops in on Operation Motorman. No-one can be above the law."

Criticising the Consultative Group, which is co-chaired by former vice-chairman of the Policing Board, Denis Bradley and former Archbishop of Armagh, Lord Eames, Mr Bradley claimed: "The Good Friday Agreement stipulated that the British and Irish governments should take joint responsibility for such matters as setting up such a group, half and half.

"Yet the Irish government have had no involvement in this. It has been brought about by the British government. The consultative group have basically had just a week of speaking with victims' relatives in public meetings and 10 days of meeting with victims' groups.

"At the end of their consultation they have until this summer to compile their report which will then go to the British government, who can say 'this is what we are doing; we have done our bit'. It basically shuts the door," he claimed.

Mr Bradley added that bereaved families deserved the chance to have their loved ones' deaths investigated more fully.

"If the victims are forgotten the anger and bitterness will go on," he said.

A spokesman for the Consultative Group on the past said: "The Group began its public consultation in September last year.

"In the five months since then they have met and listened to hundreds of people, including many victims and survivors.

"A submission has been received from Mr Bradley, who also spoke at last week's public meeting (in Derry). His views will be carefully considered along with all other submissions as the Group begins the difficult task of writing the report.

"The issue of its independence was raised and discussed at the meeting in St Columb's Park House. The Group has listened to the concerns raised and would ask everyone to judge them on their final report."

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