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## Thousands set to join Bloody Sunday march

By Brendan McDaid  
Saturday, 31 January 2009

Thousands are expected to turn out tomorrow for what is expected to be the last Bloody Sunday march to take place before the disclosure of the Saville Inquiry report.

The march will mark the 37th anniversary of the original civil rights demonstration on January 30, 1972, when 13 unarmed men and boys were shot dead by paratroopers in the Bogside.

The original march had been organised to call for an end to discrimination against Catholics, gerrymandering and internment without trial, and was banned by the authorities at the time.

The Widgery Inquiry which followed the events of Bloody Sunday, sitting in Coleraine, has been described as a "whitewash" by the families of those who died, the wounded, those on the march, civil rights leaders, politicians and the wider nationalist public.

As a result, thousands have gathered annually over the interim years to follow the route from Creggan to the Bogside in a long running campaign for justice led by the relatives of the dead and the wounded.

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair announced a second tribunal over a decade ago with Lord Saville of Newdigate expected to release his findings in the autumn of this year.

A minute's silence was held yesterday afternoon to mark the moment 37 years ago to the day when the shooting began on Bloody Sunday.

On Sunday, a sea of Palestinian flags is set to colour the parade along the traditional route from Creggan to the Bogside after organisers ordered in 1,000 of the flags to express solidarity with the people of Gaza following the recent assault by Israeli forces on the Palestinian strip.

The march will convene at the Creggan Shops tomorrow at 2.30pm, with the rally to include speeches by representatives from the Bloody Sunday families, Sinn Fein and SDLP.

A spokesman for the organisers, the Bloody Sunday Weekend Committee, said: "This year the march will stop in William Street, at the point where the original march was stopped on its way to the Guildhall, to signify how the families' search for justice is being denied by delays in the publication of the report of the Bloody Sunday inquiry."

Meanwhile at 5pm today there will be a candlelight vigil for Gaza on Shipquay Street in the city centre, followed at 6pm by the Bloody Sunday Fundraising Concert: Songs of Struggle & Change at the Gasyard Centre — admission is £3.

The annual Bloody Sunday lecture will take place tonight at the Calgach Centre, featuring Clive Stafford Smith, director of Reprieve and a lawyer for those held in Guantanamo Bay.

A spokesman for the BSWC last night said: "The original Bloody Sunday march was held to protest the policy of internment without trial.

"It is fitting that this year's lecture should host the leading human rights defender acting on behalf of those held without trial in the modern day equivalent of Long Kesh-Guantanamo Bay."

At 8pm tonight there will be a screening of the Bloody Sunday documentary and an update on the Saville Inquiry at the Ancient Order of Hibernians Hall on Foyle Street.

Before the march tomorrow, there will be a wreath laying ceremony and prayer service from 11am at the Bloody Sunday Memorial on Rossville Street.

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