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Local & National

Omagh dad urges cross-border probe

Thursday, January 24, 2008

By Ashleigh McDonald

A Tyrone man who lost his son in the Omagh bomb today called for a cross-border inquiry into the 1998 terrorist attack.

Michael Gallagher, whose son Aidan was one of the 29 people killed in the atrocity, called for the co-operation of both the British and Irish governments should such an inquiry take place.

Mr Gallagher's comments were made earlier today following former police chief Sir Ronnie Flanagan's first public apology to the families of those who perished in the bomb.

Speaking on the BBC's Good Morning Ulster programme, Mr Gallagher welcomed the apology but spoke of widespread failings in the nine-and-a-half year investigation into the Real IRA bombing, saying it would do no good to "look at one individual".

He said: "These failings are not just confined to Northern Ireland because that is only one part of the story and that's why we feel the need for some form of over-arching inquiry."

"We need a public inquiry that will look at both sides of the border and find out why this crime was not solved when there was such goodwill at the time."

Mr Gallagher - who is chairman of the Omagh support group - spoke of the many issues surrounding the investigation into the August 1998 bombing.

He said: "All of these issues are not going to be dealt with by one individual apologising."

"I think we need both governments co-operating to get to the truth of Omagh. To look at one part of the story, which is Northern Ireland, would be wrong. I feel there have been failings south of the border."

Mr Gallagher also revealed that he met the family of one of the Spanish nationals killed in the Omagh bombing during a recent trip to Madrid.

He attended the fourth International Conference on Victims of Terrorism.

Describing meeting the Spanish family as "moving", Mr Gallagher said the benefit of attending an international conference was learning how different people from a variety of countries tried to resolve the problem of terrorism.

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