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By Linda McKee

14 November 2006

Many of the serious crimes that took place during the Troubles will never be re-examined, Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde has warned.

The Chief Constable told an audience at Queen's University Belfast last night that there is not the capacity within the Historical Enquiries Team (HET) to deal with all the cases that left people maimed or dead, and voiced doubts over whether the team will be able to deliver within its timeframe and within resources.

He was also critical of public inquiries, warning that their impact on the past could be marginal.

Delivering a speech on 'Policing the Past to Police the Future' as part of the Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice Seminar Series, Sir Hugh said: "There were 3,268 deaths related to the security situation.

"In virtually every case, families have questions they would like answers to. In addition to these, tens of thousands of people were injured or traumatised, and still face significant challenges on a daily basis.

"There is not the capacity to deal with all these cases. Many very serious crimes will never be looked at again as the resources are just not available.

"Indeed whether we can deliver within our time frame and within resources is something I am looking at. But we will continue to try our best in the hope that in the near future we will see some leadership grip this issue once and for all," he said.

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