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IRA urged to help Northern Ireland Troubles group

Thursday, 5 March 2009

A group addressing the legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland made a direct public appeal today for the IRA to co-operate with its work.

The Consultative Group on the Past issued a report in January after 18 months of talks with dozens of victims, terrorists, security force officers and government agencies.

But co-chair Denis Bradley told an all-party committee in Dublin today that the IRA had closed its door and he appealed to the terror organisation to help his group's work.

"The only door that has been closed is that of the IRA," Mr Bradley told the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, in Leinster House.

Addressing TDs and MEPs, he added: "I think it is going to be a disgrace if the IRA stand offside."

The former vice-chairman of the Northern Ireland Policing Board made a direct plea for co-operation from the terror group.

"I would appeal to the IRA," he said.

"I know how difficult this will be because many people who were involved in the IRA want to get on with their lives and that is understandable.

"But ways must be found if any truth process is to take place in a comprehensive way."

Mr Bradley told the three-hour meeting that his group had a duty to achieve as much truth and justice as possible.

He added: "Ways must be constructed to bring as much reconciliation as possible into all of this. There is no time or space to stand aside."

Sinn Fein's Dail leader, Caoimhghin O Caolain, said his party would fully play its part in the quest for truth and justice now and in the future.

The British Government appointed Mr Bradley and former Church of Ireland primate Lord Robin Eames in June 2007 to lead the way in addressing the legacy of the Troubles and to recommend ways to move forward.

Lord Eames said: "We had thought we had seen it all but nothing could have prepared us for what lay ahead of us in the past 18 months.

"The clear message from everybody we talked to is that 'this must never happen again'."

Border TD Margaret Conlon said: "We must be mature enough to acknowledge wrongdoing on all sides in order to make mutual forgiveness possible."

She added: "There is an onus on us all to ensure we never go down that road of violence again."

The Cavan/Monaghan politician said one of the most regrettable aspect of the Troubles was that the bodies of some people have never been found and their families have no grave at which to grieve.

Committee member Sinn Fein MP Pat Doherty warned: "Be careful that you are not used by the British Government to try to block exposure of what they were up to during the conflict."

Lord Eames denied there was any pressure from the British Government on how his group carried out its work.

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Secretary of State Shaun Woodward has ruled out a recommendation that each person who lost relatives in the Troubles would receive a £12,000 one-off payment.

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unbelievable
i thought there was peace in northern ireland
what happened to the good friday agreement

Posted by susan | 05.03.09, 19:20 GMT

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Pat Doherty talks about coverups without a hint of irony.

I know that Gerry was never a member of the IRA cos he told us so, although he did like to dress up as a "freedom fighter" sometimes.

But what were you up to Pat?

Posted by truthonallsides | 05.03.09, 19:03 GMT

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