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'Maze files destroyed after LVF's Billy Wright killed'

Thursday, 19 February 2009

Prison chiefs ordered the emergency destruction of more than 5,000 files after jailed loyalist chief Billy Wright was murdered, the High Court has heard.

Two people were allegedly paid a total of £14,000 to get rid of the documents before data protection regulations were introduced.

The claims were contained in a letter from DUP MLA Ian Paisley Jr, who is refusing to name the prison officer he says supplied him with the information. His stance is being challenged by the public inquiry set up to probe the shooting of Wright inside the Maze Prison in December 1997.

Lawyers for tribunal chairman Lord MacLean are seeking a High Court order compelling the MLA to co-operate with its requests for the officer's identity.

With the case due to be heard in the High Court next month, Mr Paisley Jnr's party has tabled a motion at Stormont calling for public representatives to be protected from having to name sources. The DUP representative also made an application to have the inquiry disclose a list of seven types of documents, which the judge dismissed.

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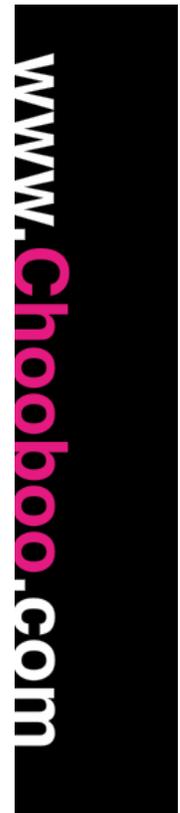
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