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Troubles compensation an insult to victims, says First Minister

By Lisa Smyth and Brian Rowan
Saturday, 24 January 2009

A furious political row erupted last night on a shock proposal to compensate relatives of everyone killed in the Troubles — including members of paramilitary groups.

The Consultative Group on the Past, co-chaired by Denis Bradley and Lord Robin Eames, has recommended that relatives of anyone fatally injured during violence related to the Troubles — including members of the security forces, civilians and paramilitary members — should receive £12,000.

However, DUP leader Peter Robinson MLA last night reacted angrily to the proposals and said his party will work to ensure the proposals are not adopted.

“As yet, I have not seen a copy of the Group’s recommendations but media reports on the issue are both disappointing and disturbing,” he said.

“Dealing with the legacy of the past is a monumental task. It must be handled with sensitivity and due care for the needs of innocent victims with the maintenance of justice at its core. We will not allow any whitewashing of the past in order to absolve those guilty of heinous acts carried out against innocent people.

“The DUP has consistently opposed any equation between the perpetrator of crimes during the Troubles and the innocent victim. There can be no equation.

“We will not give our support to any proposal which would blur the line between the terrorist and the innocent victim nor will we accept or endorse the work of any process which would seek to absolve murderers and criminals of their guilt.

“This process has been a waste of time.”

However, SDLP MLA Alex Attwood did not immediately condemn the proposals but said: “The SDLP has advised Eames/Bradley to be cautious about laying down time limits for inquiries, or deadlines for the work of any future legacy commission. The needs of victims and survivors are not time-limited and cannot be measured in financial or other quantities.

“The single biggest point made by the SDLP to Eames/Bradley was that their proposals should be measured against the standard of moving forward on an ethical basis. This is the standard the SDLP will use to judge any proposal including any proposal for payments to victims and survivors.”



First Minister Peter Robinson

ENLARGE

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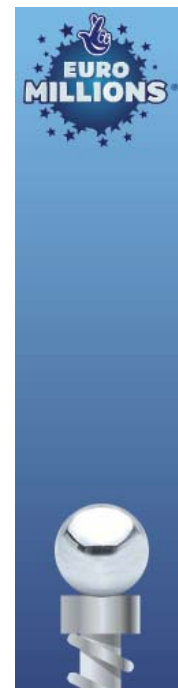
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Will the 12,000 be to individual people or a whole family?
I think some clarification is needed here, and by the way to give money to any terrorists is a disgrace, anyone who argues different has obviously not been directly affected by the troubles.

Posted by *Stuart* | 26.01.09, 12:09 GMT

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It is encouraging to see that just about everyone commenting here on this forum sees this proposal to pay (the surviving relatives of) all those who were engaged in murder as sheer madness.

It would be infinitely better to pursue and support / fund initiatives to break down the barriers that prevent social integration such as segregated schools and ghettoized neighborhoods.

Posted by *alwyn* | 25.01.09, 17:43 GMT

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Brilliant, a lot of good people will be able to treat themselves and their families to a wee holiday this summer. Not everyone is wallowing in the gravy train of state pensions!

Posted by *le gak* | 25.01.09, 17:27 GMT

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Shouldn't the Protestant & Catholic churches be footing this bill for compensation? After all it was their divisions that brought this conflict about.

Posted by Mike | 25.01.09, 15:31 GMT

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This is terrible how can terrorists be treated like real victims. If this was any other country in the world Eames an Bradley would be laughed out of the country. How can Eames class these people like real victims when he took part in so many of the funerals of police officers murdered like my father.

Posted by Andrea | 25.01.09, 14:05 GMT

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Several comments are called for.

It is absolutely right for the Eames/Bradley commission to insist that there can be no hierarchy of victims. Whether a payment is the best way of signaling this is clearly a matter for discussion, but whilst there is huge respect within the Unionist community for the soldiers and police who died, so in the nationalist community there is huge respect for the IRA volunteers who helped bring about change.

Secondly, there is some real financial hardship amongst those who lost love ones. I suspect this proposal is an attempt to acknowledge this.

Thirdly, the report is not yet published. However that has not stopped politicians, particularly Unionist politicians, trying to cut off debate before it has started. I hope people so quick to rush to judgement now before they've read the report will look at all the proposals before signaling acceptance or rejection.

Posted by Robin Percival | 25.01.09, 12:35 GMT

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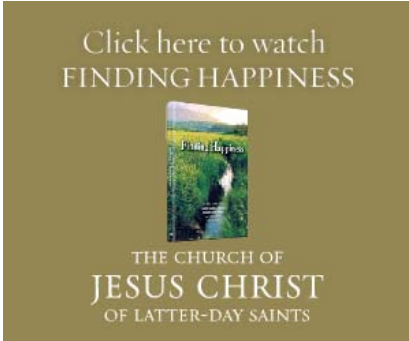
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I R A volunteers on ' active service ' saw themselves as fighting for Irish freedom and the numerous memorials and plaques to their dead reinforce their political beliefs. R U C., U D R ., and British Army personnel saw themselves as defenders of freedom in the face of ruthless

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tyranny.
It is because these two sets of belief have intersected that we have a common set in the peace process.
£12000 to surviving family sufferers is amoral and is a genuine attempt to secure the peace.

Posted by George | 25.01.09, 12:06 GMT

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this could only led to a "Knighthood" for Eames and Bradley, well,are the not giving "Knighthoods" to comedians these days.
To serious to laugh about, it makes my blood boil
and I hope Peter Robinson and his colleges will get it stopped.

Posted by john | 25.01.09, 01:29 GMT

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Bradley, Eames, the dup, they all have rewarded terrorists.
Its a bit rich for robbo to come out lambasting this when he "Lundyed" the people who then supported the dup, by putting unrepentant terrorists in government..
Shame on all the dup for what they have done.

Posted by once bitten | 24.01.09, 23:54 GMT

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I remember a song from years ago entitled "Crime doesn't pay" Well it also should NOT be compensated by Tax-payers money. The entire province of law abiding citizens should be up in arms about this insane proposal.

Posted by Stuart | 24.01.09, 22:59 GMT

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my sixteen year old brother was murdered 15th August 1998 (omagh bombing) for anyone to suggest that his life can be measured in the same terms as terrorists disgusts me . my brother did not choose to join an illegal organisation and kill people , he was walking innocently down a street on a saturday afternoon, I accept that the families of these terrorists have lost also but that was their choice when they joined these groups , for people to get paid for murdering people is a crime in itself . people keep telling us to move on , that's a difficult thing to do when you have very painful memories to live with but things like this proposal just twist the knife even deeper , it's about time they thought about the real victims and not the perpetrators.

Posted by Elaine | 24.01.09, 21:49 GMT

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Has anyone bothered to check the sanity of Eames and Bradley?

Posted by Al | 24.01.09, 19:26 GMT

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Interesting juxtaposition of photos atop this article, what!

There can be no compensation for the violent death of a loved one. Perhaps Eames/Bradley understand this and want to signal that all bereaved in this way should be recognised.

If NI wants to move on, then a time must come when those who pulled the trigger, those who motivated them and those who say "we - and not they - are the victims" must want a better and common/shared future.

Posted by vögli | 24.01.09, 19:02 GMT

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"I am totally in favour of the compensation package.

It's the only way forward." - Jon Hatch, you could try to articulate some kind of case for that. I certainly can't see one (nor can the vast majority of people posting here).

Posted by Jonathan | 24.01.09, 18:56 GMT

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Murderers getting out of prison early under GFA and now families of dead terrorists being compensated. This is not only an insult to innocent victims' families it is an insult to our intelligence! Had to check the calendar. Thought it must be April 1st. Now it really is time for all decent people to stand up and be counted.

Posted by Margaret | 24.01.09, 17:42 GMT

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The inmates really are running the asylum. My young brother was murdered by republican terrorists in 1981. The perpetrators have never been brought to account. Now, to add insult to injury, this commission wants to reward the families of dead terrorists. Little wonder some people take the law into their own hands.

Posted by tommy hall | 24.01.09, 17:11 GMT

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Utter lunacy.

Posted by Jon | 24.01.09, 17:05 GMT

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12K for murder. The ultimate in moral relativism.

I hope sincerely that those who say 'pay, and move on' are in the minority. If not, then I'd have lost all faith in my fellow Ulstermen.

Posted by russell | 24.01.09, 16:24 GMT

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I think the money should go to trying to bring the two communities together. Money does not bring people back and it doesn't prompt forgiveness if forgiveness is not there to be found.

Posted by Casey | 24.01.09, 16:11 GMT

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Every right thinking person should be outraged by these proposals, an absolute disgrace and insult to genuine victims. Eames and Bradley should be ashamed!!

Posted by col | 24.01.09, 15:23 GMT

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