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By Lisa Smyth
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Investigators who uncovered the suspected partial remains of an IRA victim on a remote hillside are using their ground-breaking methods at five other potential burial sites, it has been revealed.

A special DNA database has also been set up of all the families of the so-called Disappeared as part of a new scientific approach that is hoped will finally lead to the bodies of nine people still missing.

Meanwhile, relatives of the Disappeared have made an

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impassioned plea for information which will lead to the location of those murdered and buried in secret locations during the Troubles.

What are these?

They were speaking as the family of one of the Disappeared — Danny McIlhone — awaits the results of DNA tests being carried out on human remains discovered in bogland in Co Wicklow.

Scientists from the Republic's State Pathologist are carrying out tests on a human foot, a boot and a sock discovered in the Wicklow Mountains on Saturday which is believed to be that of Mr McIlhone who vanished from west Belfast in 1981.

They are trying to identify the complex genetic code of the partial remains which will be sent to a forensic science laboratory in England where the special Disappeared database is housed.

If it matches with samples already taken from Mr McIlhone's family it will positively identify the remains as that of the missing teenager and end decades of misery and uncertainty for his relatives.

Investigators have already rolled out their new techniques at five more suspected burial locations in counties Monaghan, Meath and Louth.

They are also to begin similar strategies at two other sites in the Republic as well as at a forest near Rouen in northern France, where it is believed INLA victim Seamus Ruddy is buried.

His sister, Anne Morgan, spoke of the agony endured by her family since her brother's disappearance some 23 years ago and the hope they cling to that they will one day be able to give him a Christian burial.

She said: "Before my mother died she had my brother's name inscribed on the headstone. She was preparing the ground for him. She said it was going to be in stone so that no-one would forget him. Then she died shortly after that.

"I think it is very important for us to bury him in the same soil as her. We're in limbo at the moment. We're not looking for justice. We are just looking for the human right to bury a loved one.

"This year myself and my sister went over to France to a search by the forensic team.

"They did it for five days but to no avail. He wasn't there. I was devastated by that as I thought I was going to get to bring him home.

"I would have said then that there was no hope but now I would say that there is hope. I hope we will get the proper information concerning where our loved ones' are and that one day all the families will get the bodies back."

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