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## Local & National

### Orde urged to reveal Stevens probe secrets

#### Sir Hugh will rule on report release

Thursday, September 06, 2007

By Chris Thornton

The PSNI Chief Constable will be pushed today to publish the secret reports of the Stevens Inquiry.

Sir Hugh Orde was being asked at today's Policing Board meeting to produce the reports - because the Government says it's up to him whether the confidential documents are released or not.

Lord Stevens conducted three investigations into collusion allegations between 1989 and 2003, producing reports on each inquiry that amount to thousands of pages.

Sir Hugh contributed to the third report - acting as the operational head of the Stevens Inquiry - then received its final draft after he became PSNI chief constable.

A condensed summary of that report was released in 2003, declaring that members of the security forces had colluded with loyalists in a number of crimes, including murder.

At the end of June this year, four years after the report was submitted, the Prosecution Service announced that there would be no new prosecutions arising out of the third Stevens Inquiry.

Campaigners say that should remove any obstacles to publishing the reports, although there is the possibility of a public inquiry into the murder of Pat Finucane, which was the focus of the third inquiry.

Sinn Fein MLA Alex Maskey says he decided to ask Sir Hugh directly about publishing the reports after seeing the Government statement that the reports are the responsibility of the PSNI.

Former Secretary of State Peter Hain made the declaration in a letter sent to the group Relatives for Justice.

"I'm basically saying to the Chief Constable 'do you intend to publish all or any of these reports?'" Mr Maskey said.

"These reports have been outstanding for years.

"They've never been published - one was part published, but more often there have been leaks and speculation.

"The chief constable talks about the past regularly, saying it gets in the way of policing and inquiries cost too much.

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"Our argument is that the truth doesn't cost money - it's the cover-up that costs money.

"At the last Policing Board meeting we spent some time probing around the issue of Stevens and the inquiries.

"I'm asking him now, let's cut to the chase: 'do you intend to publish or not?'"

Relatives for Justice, a group that campaigns for greater revelations about collusion, supports the call to publish.

Mark Thompson, the organisation's director, said: "Peter Hain told us that the chief constable has the sole responsibility for publication.

"Obviously with the Prosecution Service's decision not to prosecute anyone, there's no impediment to publication.

"There's no reason now not to do it."

Mr Maskey says he has also raised questions about the protocol for PSNI presentations to the Board.

He says he wants the Board to push the PSNI for presentations on topics of their choice.

"It's not good enough that we turn up and get a presentation. We should be asking for the topics," he said.

"It's part of the process of the Policing Board taking greater responsibility."

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