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[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Politics](#)

## Politics

### Paisley: victims back Sinn Fein deal

**'Their anger is with how they were treated by Government'**

Monday, June 11, 2007

By Chris Thornton

Ian Paisley says his decision to share power with Sinn Fein has been supported in "scores of messages" from victims of the Troubles.

In the second part of an exclusive Belfast Telegraph TV interview, the First Minister claimed some of the most vocal criticism against him has come from people "who never suffered in these Troubles".

"I attended more funerals in this country than any other living man at the time of the Troubles," he told Editor-in-Chief Ed Curran in the interview. Extracts are printed in today's newspaper and the interview in full can be viewed on our website at [www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk](http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk)

Mr Paisley, whose office is now responsible for victims' issues, said people who suffered in the Troubles are a source of "great wonderment to me" .

"I was received in all of those homes, and they know, people know that Ian Paisley was broken-hearted," he added.

"I followed many of my dearest friends to the cemetery and wept over them. The majority of victims I think are angry, with the fact the way the British Government treated them. I think that is where their anger is."

The First Minister indicates that he has no regrets over his own behaviour during the conflict.

"I may have said things in a way that hurt people, but I think they needed to be said in that way, for if I hadn't have said them in that way no-one would have listened," he said.

And he also described his continuing astonishment at being in the First Minister's office after years of opposition.

Mr Paisley was today facing his first Question Time in the Assembly on a range of issues including strengthened links with other parts of the UK, the costs of segregation and the role of junior ministers, which could see him asked about the remarks of his son Ian Jnr on homosexuality.

Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness faces his turn in a fortnight.

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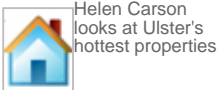
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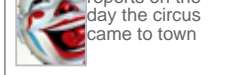
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