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'Murph Massacre families to meet Ahern

Andersonstown News Monday

by Roisin McManus

The families of those killed in the 1971 Ballymurphy Massacre are expected to meet with the Irish Minister of Justice Dermot Ahern in Belfast next month.

The meeting will be held following a request from West Belfast MP Gerry Adams.

Speaking in advance of the meeting, which is expected to take place on November 17, Alice Harper, daughter of Daniel Teggart, said: "Officially meeting the Irish government is a significant step forward in terms of our overall campaign for truth and justice regarding the murders of our loved ones.

"They were murdered during the Ballymurphy Massacre in August, 1971, when 11 unarmed civilians, including a mother-of-eight and a Catholic priest, were deliberately gunned down by members of the British army's Parachute Regiment over the course of 60 hours, leaving 52 children without a parent."

Alice said that the meeting follows on from their successful lobbying of members of the Oireachtas in Dublin in April, which had a significant impact.

"The horrific nature of these murders, and the fact that so little is known about the incident, had an immediate impact during our briefings in Dublin," said Alice.

"Representatives from every political party at Leinster House, with the exception of the PDs, raised the case and indeed opposition leader Enda Kenny TD tabled a question on the Ballymurphy Massacre as part of Taoiseach Brian Cowen's first question time."

Alice said that the meeting with Mr Ahern was being facilitated by West Belfast MP Gerry Adams.

She commended Mr Adams, who she said had been extremely supportive

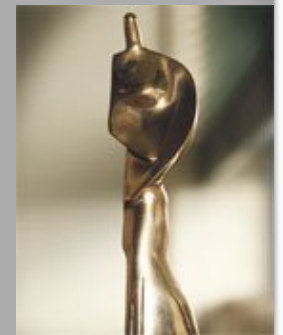
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Love and Marriage

of the families and their campaign.

“The meeting is particularly welcome in that the families will personally apprise the Minister of the events of August 9, 1971 and of central aims of our families’ campaign which seeks truth, justice, and acknowledgment of our individual and collective loss.

“The families will be requesting specific support from the Irish government in terms of assistance to take forward their campaign.

“This will be based on our need for an independent investigation with official acknowledgment of the terrible wrong-doing and subsequent systematic cover-up and impunity,” she added.

Gerry Adams met families from the Ballymurphy Massacre Committee and Relatives for Justice at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, last Monday.

The meeting was to discuss the families’ campaign for justice and its progress to date.

“The families of the 11 people killed by the British army's Parachute Regiment in the Ballymurphy area in the three days following the introduction of internment in August 1971 deserve an apology from the British government and the truth about the circumstances surrounding the massacre of their loved ones,” said Mr Adams, speaking after Monday’s meeting.

“All of these families deserve the full support and encouragement of the community and of the Irish government in their efforts to secure an independent international investigation into these deaths and to have the British government acknowledge the truth surrounding the shooting dead of their loved ones,” he added.

The Wedding Planner

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