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- **Published Date:** 04 July 2007
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Troubles legacy group meet in Derry



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THE group responsible for examining the legacy of the North's Troubles met for the first time in Derry

yesterday.

The consultative group, set up by former Secretary of State Peter Hain, has been established to seek a consensus across the community in Northern Ireland on the best way to deal with the legacy of the past. Co-chaired by Denis Bradley and Lord Eames, the group met in closed session at the Everglades Hotel to consider how it should take forward its work in order to produce a report with recommendations next summer.

Speaking after yesterday's meeting, Lord Eames said: "We have had a very encouraging first meeting today. There is a long road ahead of us, but we will travel that road with the determination that everyone in our society who wants will have an opportunity to make their views known to us. Our past cannot change, but what we do with our memories will help us shape a great deal of our future.

"We have no preconceived notion at this stage about our recommendations, but they will be the result of a great deal of hard and honest work from everyone in the group."

Denis Bradley added: "Now, we are at the beginning of a process that will allow everyone in our society, a society that has emerged from decades of violence, to have a voice in the knowledge that it is not going to be set aside or forgotten, but that on the contrary it can contribute to securing the bright future that our recent political settlement holds out in hope.

Inclusive

"We need to focus on the future, an inclusive future for everyone, but we can't do that without dealing with the shadows of the past in an acceptable and appropriate way."

Full details of how to contact the group will be published in the near future.

The new body is aiming to perform a number of duties, including: consulting across the community on how Northern Ireland society can best approach the legacy of the events of the past 40 years; and to make recommendations, as appropriate, on any steps that might be taken to support Northern Ireland society in building a shared future that is not overshadowed by the events of the past.

The final plan is to present a report setting out conclusions to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by summer 2008.

Those involved with the body have said they may choose to engage additional advisers to ensure the group has access to a wide range of expert advice, both on international issues and on other specialist areas.

The other members of the group are: Jarlath Burns, former GAA captain of Armagh and GAA analyst, Rev Lesley Carroll, Presbyterian Ministers, Willie John McBride, former captain of the British and Irish Lions rugby team, James Mackey, former lecturer in philosophy at Queen's University Belfast and visiting professor at Trinity College, Dublin, Elaine Moore, alcohol and drugs counsellor at Northlands, based at Magilligan Prison and David Porter, Director of the Centre for Contemporary Christianity in

Ireland.

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