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Thursday, 5th July 2007

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- **Published Date:** 05 July 2007
- **Location:** Derry

## Troubles group aim for brighter future



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A group set up to deal with the legacy of Northern Ireland's conflict met in Derry this week and pledged

to help forge a brighter future.

As the independent consultative group - co-chaired by former Archbishop of Armagh, Lord Eames, and Denis Bradley, the ex-Policing Board vice chairman - held its first meeting in the city, plans were drawn up to produce a report with recommendations by next summer.

Both men stressed their work would take time, but could yield huge common benefits.

Lord Eames said: "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."

The group has been established to consult on how Northern Ireland society can best deal with the past 40 years, and to make recommendations on building a shared future.

Its recommendations are to be presented to the Secretary of State next year.

Mr Bradley, an ex-priest who once helped broker secret talks between the IRA and British Government, shared this assessment.

He said: "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.

"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."

The group's other members are: Jarlath Burns, former Armagh GAA captain; Presbyterian Minister Rev Lesley Carroll; 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.

Last Updated: 05 July 2007 11:09 AM

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