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'Don't equate terrorists with victims' - says Campbell



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By Staff reporter

Any attempt to equate "terrorists" with victims in a process dealing with the legacy of the Troubles will be thwarted from the outset, Gregory Campbell warned republicans this week.

The DUP MP said he and his party will stand in the way of any such truth mechanism, after Sinn Féin's Gerry Adams called for any probe into the past to deal with everyone equally.

The West Belfast MP was speaking this week at a press conference to promote the March for Truth being staged by republicans in Belfast this Sunday. He said an independent truth commission including international experts should be considered for dealing with Northern Ireland's Troubles history.

But Mr Campbell responded: "Adams appears to be trying the standard republican technique of internationalising the Northern Ireland problem in the hope that those from a considerable distance away will simply view the violence as being carried out by participants on either side of a level playing field, with no real difference between the perpetrators of violence and others.

"Those of us closer to home know there's all the difference in the world between Adams and his comrades in the IRA, who were responsible for more deaths, more misery and mayhem than all of the other (as they would say) participants, most of whom were the IRA's victims.

"He is hoping to equate perpetrator with victim but it will not work and not be allowed to work."

He added: "Conventional wisdom appears to be that the South African-style truth commission would not work here and I agree with that. I think that whatever way we deal with the legacy of a murder campaign, the cardinal principle and absolute pre-requisite must be that victims – whether Protestant or Catholic – must never be equated with those who carried out the violence."

Earlier this summer, former Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Hain announced an independent panel, including former Church of Ireland Archbishop Lord Robin Eames and former Catholic priest Denis Bradley, to debate ways of dealing with more than 3,000 unsolved murders.

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