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Sisters plan civil case over Belfast murder

Henry McDonald
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[The Guardian](#)

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The sisters of murdered Belfast man Robert McCartney said yesterday they are pursuing a civil case against his alleged killers that will name, among others, senior members of the IRA in the city.

Three years after the 33-year-old father of two was savagely beaten and stabbed to death outside a Belfast bar, the McCartneys said they were taking the case because there was still "a wall of silence" that was protecting at least 10 key suspects. The family allege that these suspects are members of the Provisional IRA and that organisation has intimidated witnesses into not coming forward.

Only one man, Terence Davidson, 51, has been charged with the murder. Two other men James McCormick, 38, and Joseph Fitzpatrick, 46, have been charged with affray. The McCartneys want to pursue a civil case following the murder trial, which is expected to start in April.

"We hope that the murder trial will open doors to allow us to take a civil action against the people we believe were behind Robert's murder," said Paula McCartney.

She added that she did not accept assurances from the Sinn Féin leadership that it supported her family's

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campaign for justice. Sinn Féin insisted yesterday that it still supported them "unequivocally".

The McCartneys' planned civil action will be similar to the one being pursued by some of the families of victims of the 1998 Omagh bomb atrocity.

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