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This is wonderful says victims' group

(Bimpe Fatogun, [Irish News](#))

Two days after the start of the 1974 Ulster Workers Council strike came the biggest loss of life on a single day in the Troubles.

Ian Paisley had taken a high-profile role in the strike which began on May 15 and led to the fall of a short-lived power-sharing administration.

The collapse of the executive established under the Sunningdale Agreement on January 1 has been cited as at least a contributory factor to the massive death toll which followed in the next 30 years of sectarian strife.

Thirty-three people died and many more were injured and maimed by coordinated UVF car bombs in Dublin and Monaghan on May 17 1974.

In Dublin 25 people were killed or fatally injured by three car bombs which went off almost simultaneously and without warning around the city centre during rush-hour. A bus strike meant there were more pedestrians than usual on the streets.

Ninety minutes later another exploded in Monaghan, killing six people and fatally injuring another.

Margaret Urwin is spokeswoman for Justice for the Forgotten, the support and pressure group representing the victims of the bombings.

She welcomed yesterday's rapprochement between Mr Paisley and Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams.

"It is a wonderful day," Ms Urwin said.

"It is marvellous that this [power-sharing] is going to happen and is on course, even if one more deadline has been missed.

"It is good that it is going ahead in May and that is the time we will see the beginning of the end of the conflict.

"It is a good month as it is the anniversary of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings."

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Ms Urwin said victims and relatives were taking the breakthrough at face value rather than reflecting on what might have been.

"Of course one would love to say that it should have happened before this but we can't turn back the clock unfortunately," she said.

In fact, Ms Urwin said that following the publication of the recent report by Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan and others by Mr Justice Henry Barron – all into security-force collusion with paramilitaries – she believed Sunningdale was always going to be a false dawn.

"It was more than an opportunity missed," she said.

"I think there were forces in the background keeping the pot boiling on both sides. These forces were part of the British establishment.

"One of the terrible tragedies was that it was not just about loyalists and republicans or Gerry Adams and Ian Paisley. It was about who was pulling the strings."

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