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Real IRA admits McGurk murder

(Marie Louise McCrory, [Irish News](#))

A dissident republican paramilitary group has admitted responsibility for the murder of a father-of-five in west Belfast saying the killing was "criminally wrong".

In a statement the Real IRA said it had conducted a 12-month "prolonged internal investigation" into the murder of Danny McGurk (35).

The group said Mr McGurk had been an "innocent civilian" and offered its "sincere condolences" to his family and friends.

The McGurk family had been informed of the statement during a meeting in west Belfast.

Mr McGurk's mother Mary, three sisters and brother had been asked to attend a meeting, during which, an individual claiming to represent the Real IRA apologised for the murder.

Mr McGurk was shot five times as he lay on the settee in his home on Ross Road in the lower Falls area on August 18 2003.

Some of his children were at home when three men, two of whom were masked and armed, entered the house at around 11am that Sunday.

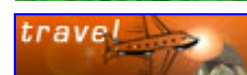
The McGurk family blamed the Real IRA for the murder.

Just months before the murder, Mr McGurk had been involved in a disagreement with some members of the Real IRA in a west Belfast pub.

A week before he was killed, Mr McGurk was said to have been beaten by a gang – believed to members of the Real IRA – after a confrontation at a house in Ross Street, near his home.

An inquest into the murder in September heard there had been 10 arrests but no-one was charged.

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Police revealed the murder weapon was found in a car on the Letterkenny Road in Co Derry on November 7 2003. However, charges brought against three men who were travelling in the car were later dropped.

The inquest heard Mr McGurk was unconnected to any paramilitary organisation.

The Real IRA statement said: "After a prolonged internal investigation over the past 12 months by the leadership of Oglaiigh na hEireann, we have concluded the finding that the murder of Danny McGurk, an innocent civilian, was criminally wrong and detracted from the goal of Irish liberation.

"The leadership of Oglaiigh na hEireann offer their sincere condolences to the entire McGurk family and friends and unequivocally apologise to them for the murder of their loved one."

Mr McGurk's sister Geraldine said her family were "very happy" with the statement but said they would be pursuing convictions.

"My mother is glad she got the apology before she died," she said.

"We got a phone call to meet them and we listened to what they had to say.

"Danny's death had a big impact on the family. It was very traumatic.

"For us, we still want justice."

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