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## Duffy joins hunger strike over detention

By Andrea McKernon

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PROMINENT Lurgan republican Colin Duffy has joined two other men in refusing food in protest at their arrests over murders of security force members.

A family member said his fast was in protest against his “wrongful detention” and claim he is being “demonised”.

Duffy, a former senior IRA member, was linked to Eirigi, a group which opposes Sinn Fein’s decision to share power. However, an Eirigi spokesman said earlier this month that Duffy was no longer a member.

News of the 41-year-old’s fast came as it was revealed that one of two other men who have been on hunger strike since last Monday received hospital treatment after experiencing complications.

It is understood the 31-year-old man from the Craigavon area had been taking morphine for back pain but his refusal to eat coupled with his medication had exacerbated his condition.

He was taken to hospital for several hours on Saturday and returned to the Serious Crime Suite at Antrim police station for further questioning.

The 31-year-old and another man aged 27 are on the fast, according to dissident group Republican Sinn Fein. They have been refusing food since they were arrested on March 16.

They were detained in Co Armagh and taken to Antrim following the murder of Constable Stephen Carroll as he responded to a 999 call in Craigavon on March 9.

The Continuity IRA said it murdered the 48-year-old officer.

Last night the organisation revealed that a group of dissident republican prisoners in Maghaberry jail would conduct a 24-hour no-food protest this week in “solidarity” with the men being held in Antrim over the officer’s murder.

The Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ), a pressure group, has expressed its concern at the continuing detentions.

“Once people are arrested it is a sign of suspicion but to hold people over this period of time implies that the police are hunting for information rather than having any information,” Mick Richie of CAJ said.

But DUP MP Jeffrey Donaldson welcomed the extended detention of the suspects.

“One has to question the motive behind these men refusing food. It would seem they don’t want to answer any pertinent questions about involvement in the recent murder,” he said.

“I welcome the fact that the police have been given more time to question these people,” he said.


A police spokesman said: "While we do not discuss named individuals we can confirm that the arrested person has been receiving medical treatment on a daily basis and arrangements are currently being made for him to see his own GP as he requested.

"Strict guidelines govern the detention of any person in police custody. Any person under arrest has ready access to medical attention as and when required. "

Brian Leeson of Eirigi last night called on Sinn Fein and the SDLP to withdraw their support for the PSNI.

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