

Most PopularMost Emailed

BreakingSportBusinessWorldGossip



Issue Changer:



NEWS >

## McGurk's bomb relative gives damning verdict of police unit

By Allison Morris

02/12/08



Troubles Outrage: The aftermath of the bombing of McGurk's Bar in north Belfast in 1971. Fifteen people, including three women and two children, were murdered by the UVF in the attack PICTURE: Courtesy of Belfast Telegraph archive

THE campaigning family of a woman killed in the McGurk's Bar bombing have called for the cold-case team tasked with investigating historic killings to be "dismantled".

This week sees the 37th anniversary of the no-warning bar bombing that claimed the lives of 15 people including three women and two children.

Only one person, UVF man Robert Campbell, was ever convicted in connection with the atrocity after admitting to being the getaway driver for the loyalist gang who set off the bomb.

Earlier this year Secretary of State Shaun Woodward issued an apology from the floor of the House of Commons to the families of the 15 innocent victims.

The apology came following the uncovering of government papers which revealed British army efforts to distort the true facts surrounding the atrocity.

Despite eyewitness evidence pointing to loyalist involvement, British army officials implied the IRA had been making a bomb on the premises at the time which had exploded prematurely.

The bombing, which led to one of the largest losses of lives of the Troubles, is currently subject to reinvestigation by the PSNI Historical Enquiries Team (HET).

However, Claran Mac Airt, grandson of Kitty Irvine (39) who died under the rubble of the destroyed bar, said

the cold-case team has proved to be a “futile, costly exercise”.

He also said that victims' families should not have high hopes of convictions arising from current HET investigations.

One aspect of the HET investigation that the Irvine family are unhappy with is the failure to question surviving members of the British military who were involved with the original McGurk investigation.

They have also asked for getaway driver Robert Campbell's background prior to bombing to be made public including any known details regarding his criminal and military background.

“At best the HET investigation was nothing more than a powerless, desktop review – at worst another cynical attempt by the British government to suppress or manage information,” Mr Mac Airt told The Irish News.

“Its slickness and professionalism is seen in nothing except marketing and PR.

“Other victims' families should beware – central to this approach is for individuals within the HET to gain the confidence of vulnerable families who then dare to hope,” he said.

“In my opinion the HET will fail to deliver.

“Families risk being left with less than nothing, their original loss and sense of injustice simply exacerbated.

“The Historical Enquiries Team should be dismantled straight away.

“Disregarding any attempt to bury the past and all memories of our loved ones with it, as the family of Kathleen Irvine we demand a truly international, independent and transparent investigation with powers of subpoena.”

 Print  back to top

Bookmark:  Delicious  Digg  reddit  Facebook  StumbleUpon

 Email this story