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Paisley owes family redress

Pro Fide et Patria

Editorial

04/06/08

Ian Paisley has changed his position on a wide range of issues in recent years but yesterday – on the brink of his scheduled retirement as first minister – he still could not bring himself to take responsibility for an outburst which caused enormous hurt to a grieving family.

Eugene Reavey, from Whitecross in south Armagh, lost three of his brothers during a sectarian attack on their

home in 1976 – the day before 10 Protestant workers were murdered in an equally appalling shooting in nearby Kingsmills.

Mr Paisley, hiding behind parliamentary privilege in 1999, made the shameful claim that Mr Reavey was linked to the Kingsmills atrocity, without producing any evidence either at the time or subsequently.

When the British government's Historical Enquiries Team, after examining the case in detail, concluded last year that none of the Reavey brothers had been involved with the IRA, Mr Paisley declined to comment.

Mr Reavey travelled to Stormont yesterday but the first minister still refused to meet him or offer any explanation for his previous allegations.

Even after he stands down from his post, Mr Paisley should be prepared to address his entirely unacceptable behaviour towards the Reavey family.

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