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## Breaking News

**09:02 NEWS:** Stormont will not pay for murder tribunals, warns Paisley

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Stormont's power sharing executive will not pick up the tab for inquiries into some of the North's most controversial murders, First Minister Ian Paisley warned the British government today.

As Prime Minister Gordon Brown's government continued to press the Northern Ireland Executive to take over responsibility for policing and the courts, the First Minister said it was unrealistic to expect Stormont to foot the bill for the tribunals.

The North Antrim MP, who will stand down as Democratic Unionist leader at the end of this month and First Minister next month, also repeated his party's demand for the IRA Army Council to disband before policing and justice powers could be devolved.

"I would be optimistic (that the powers will be eventually transferred)," the 82-year-old outgoing DUP leader said.

"However I believe the British government is facing very serious problems as far as the cost of inquiries is concerned.

"According to the figures I have seen about £90m (€114.5m) may be needed for all these inquiries looking into how people's loved ones were killed as a result of acts of terrorism.

"The Government will have to realise we will never take over these responsibilities if they expect us to take over debts they have incurred by a decision we had nothing to do with.

"If we are to assume responsibility for policing and justice we will need a clean board.

"We also have been very clear that you cannot have an (IRA) Army Council in place and have people connected

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to it in charge of the police."

Mr Paisley's DUP have resisted Irish and British government overtures to set a date in May for the transfer of policing and justice powers.

The DUP and the Ulster Unionists say there is no appetite in their community for the powers to be transferred, especially while the IRA Army Council remains intact.

The British government has committed itself to public inquiries into the murders of Lurgan solicitor Rosemary Nelson, Portadown Catholic father of two Robert Hammill, Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane and loyalist prisoner Billy Wright.

The Finucane Inquiry is the only one not to begin its work because of a stand-off between the British government and the lawyer's family over the terms in which the tribunal will be held.

The Bloody Sunday Inquiry has also cost the British government more than £180m (€229m) so far and has yet to report its findings, despite finishing public hearings three and a half years ago.