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## Orde admission vital to families

(Editorial, [Irish News](#))

The chief constable's latest comments on the highly emotive issue of plastic bullets will be seen as a positive contribution at a crucial stage in the peace process.

Sir Hugh Orde has made it clear in the past he is no advocate of their use. However, in a Press Association interview he has gone further, making it clear the weapon would not be used for public order or crowd control.

Significantly, he also publicly stated that some of those killed by plastic bullets were innocent victims.

This acknowledgement is an important step for the families of the 17 people – including a number of children – who died as a result of baton rounds fired by members of the security forces.

The circumstances of these deaths and the ongoing sense of injustice have been source of constant pain for bereaved families.

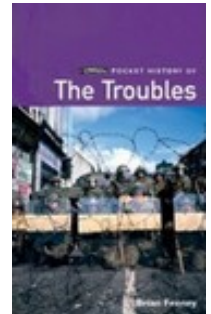
This recognition of their hurt from the most senior police officer carries considerable weight and is a welcome development.

However, the chief constable did not signal a complete end to plastic bullets and they continue to be available to police officers, although their use has decreased in recent years.

The police must be issued with adequate means of protection but baton rounds are widely viewed as unacceptable and should not form part of the PSNI's armoury.

Sir Hugh's comments on plastic bullets were made in the context of a warning of the possible dangers which could follow if Sinn Féin and the DUP fail to deliver a deal on policing.

Sinn Féin has issued positive responses this week to both the chief constable on plastic bullets and Tony Blair on the future role of MI5, although the party has expressed serious concerns over the DUP's position.



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Nevertheless, it is important that matters continue to move forward and hopefully today's (Saturday) ard chomhairle in Dublin will ensure that happens.

on thursday

January 14, 2007

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