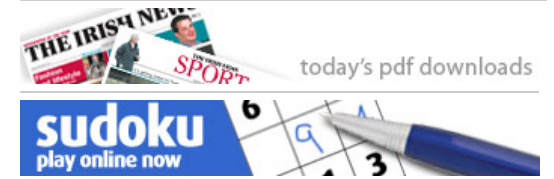


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Dissidents still pose a threat

Pro Fide et Patria

Editorial

14/02/08

The murder of Andrew Burns was accurately summed up by Strabane parish priest Fr Declan Boland, who described this crime as a "heinous, immoral and depraved act".

The 27-year-old died less than an hour after he left his family home in Strabane, Co Tyrone. His killers ended his life in the grounds of a church at Castlefin, just over the border in Co Donegal.

Despite his wounds, he managed to crawl onto the road, where he was found by teenagers attending a youth club.

This was a criminal death, all the more shocking because it took place in a peaceful area which has been largely untouched by decades of violence.

However, there are a number of malcontents determined to prolong the violent activities which brought so much misery and which no one in their right minds wants to see continue.

It is believed Andrew Burns, who had been shot and wounded in an earlier attack, was linked to a faction of republican dissidents and it seems likely his killers came from within some element of a dissident group.

His connections may tinge the public view of this murder. However, no one deserves to suffer such a fate.

This criminal act also serves as a reminder that those who claim to offer a vision for an Ireland of the future are extremely ruthless individuals who will use the most callous and brutal methods to achieve their ends.

It also underlines the fact that dissidents, although they have negligible support, no coherent strategy and are comprised of a number of sparsely-populated splinter groups, remain a threat as long as they are armed and in existence.