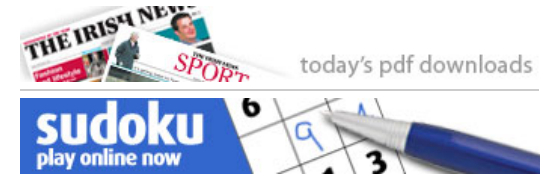


Most PopularMost Emailed

BreakingSportBusinessWorldGossip



Choose a date:



NEWS >

'No closure' for Disappeared in death laws plan

By Staff reporter

24/01/08

New plans to issue death certificates to families of people missing for more than seven years will not bring closure to relatives of the so-called Disappeared, it was claimed last night.

Oliver McVeigh, whose brother Columba was among those killed and secretly buried, dismissed draft laws designed to ease the suffering of the bereaved as no more than a gesture.

Columba was 17 when he was abducted from his family home in Donaghmore, Co Tyrone in 1975 and murdered by the IRA.

"A death certificate doesn't mean anything. It's of absolutely no relevance to me and my

family," Mr McVeigh said.

"I know my brother is dead. I don't need a death certificate to prove it.

"The only closure for us is to get the body and get him buried beside his mother and father."

The Executive launched a 12-week public consultation yesterday on proposed new laws that will allow someone who has vanished for more than seven years to be legally declared dead.

Former secretary of state Peter Hain said last year the move was designed to help the families of the Disappeared get closure.

But Mr McVeigh said there was more the executive - and in particular Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness - could do to help relieve suffering.

"This is just a gesture," he said.

"It might mean something to some people but to most it does not. The Disappeared are way down the Executive's priorities.

"Martin McGuinness could be doing a lot more in his capacity.

"I'd like to see him personally approach the people who were involved."

Mr McVeigh stressed that his family did not want to know who was behind the murder and burying of his brother, whose body has never been recovered despite extensive searches in 2003 at a bog in Emyvale, Co Monaghan.

He said they just wanted the information that could help locate Columba's body to be passed to the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains.

"The smallest bit of information could be vital," he said.

The IRA said in 1999 it would help locate the bodies of nine of its victims who were secretly buried but only four were found.

Finance minister Peter Robinson said the laws would help those families and relatives of other missing persons deal with the disappearance.

"When a person goes missing and is presumed dead, in addition to the emotional trauma, the families left behind find themselves in a legal state of limbo," he said.

[print advertising](#) | [media pack](#) | [online advertising](#) | [privacy statement](#) | [about us](#) | [contact us](#) | [subscribe](#) | [login](#) | [archives](#) | [careers](#) | [home](#)