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PIRA link to murder of chief prison officer denied

(Valerie Robinson, [Irish News](#))

A former head of the Prison Officers Association has denied claims the chief officer at Portlaoise jail was murdered by the Provisional IRA in 1983.

Ex-general secretary PJ McEvoy said he was confident the IRA did not shoot father-of-three Brian Stack in the back of the neck on a busy Dublin street.

Mr Stack was left paralysed and brain-damaged and died 18 months later from his injuries. No-one has ever been charged in connection with his death.

His family have launched a campaign to have the murder investigation reopened.

Mr McEvoy yesterday rejected a claim by a caller to an RTE radio show – claiming to be a former PIRA prisoner – that the victim was targeted because of brutal treatment of inmates at Portlaoise.

"I can contradict that absolutely 100%," he said.

Mr McEvoy said southern prison officers at the time had become increasingly concerned about violent attacks on their northern counterparts and he had personally received assurances from republican chiefs outside the prison that no member in the south would be targeted.

He also denied that Mr Stack had been involved in any brutal action towards inmates at the high security facility.

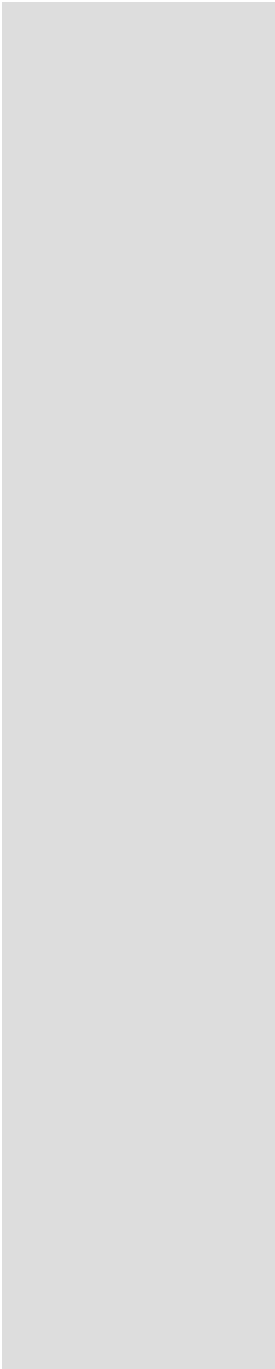
Sinn Féin TD Martin Ferris, a former leader of the PIRA in Portlaoise, has written that Brian Stack "was a particularly vindictive individual" who "thought nothing of having officers hold a prisoner while he struck him with his baton during a strip search".

October 6, 2007

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