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## Branch man in ombudsman row to give evidence to MPs

By Liz Trainor and Joanna Braniff

28/03/08

A FORMER Special Branch officer who was accused of failing to cooperate with a police ombudsman investigation into collusion is to give evidence on policing and justice to a Westminster committee.

Raymond White, pictured, is due before the Northern Ireland affairs committee on Wednesday.

The committee is holding a broad inquiry in-to the administration of policing and the criminal justice system in the north.

It will focus on the financial cost of the PSNI historical inquiries probes as well as the implications of other legislation requiring police to divulge information that could identify a covert source.

Mr White, who is chairman of the Retired Police Officers' Association, was one of the retired police superintendents at the centre of a claim that they refused to cooperate with Nuala O'Loan's investigation into collusion between police and loyalists in north Belfast.

SDLP leader Mark Durkan used parliamentary privilege to name three former heads of Special Branch who he said had failed to help with Mrs O'Loan's probe.

He identified them as Mr White, Chris Albiston and Freddie Hall.

In a statement on behalf of all three, Mr Albiston said for 18 months after supplying information the Special Branch officers had heard nothing from the ombudsman and had not been given the chance to respond to the allegations against them.

They said they had offered to cooperate and had a letter from Mrs O'Loan's office thanking them for their assistance.

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