



Wed, Mar 14, 2007

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 3. [Sport](#)
 4. [Business](#)
 5. [Technology](#)
 6. [Weather](#)
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- [Technology](#)

Last Updated: 13/03/2007 13:22

Govt receives 1974 bombs report



The scene of one of the bombings in Nassau Street, Dublin

A report into the 1974 Dublin and Monaghan bombings has been received by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern.

The Attorney General is due to study the findings of Commission of Investigation chairman Patrick MacEntee SC and give legal advice on the issue to the Cabinet.

The Taoiseach has indicated that he wishes to publish the report as soon as possible, preferably before Easter.

The Dublin and Monaghan bombings were a terrible atrocity and it is important that we uncover the truth of what happened
Taoiseach Bertie Ahern

Commenting on the report this morning he said that, by law, certain legal issues need to be considered prior to publication.

"I would like to thank Mr MacEntee and his staff for their work in conducting this investigation. The Dublin and Monaghan bombings were a terrible atrocity, and it is important that we uncover the truth of what happened," he said.

Labour leader Pat Rabbitte called on the Taoiseach to ensure the earliest possible publication of the report.

"Any delay in publication will increase the prospect of a leak of versions of the report as happened in the case of the Dean Lyons inquiry. Secondly, families of the victims of these shocking atrocities are entitled to hear the results of Mr MacEntee's investigations at the earliest possible date," he said.

"It is also important that the report be published in time to allow for a full debate on its findings in the Dáil before the election and, given the likely importance of this report, it should not simply be referred to a committee for consideration," he added.

A total of 33 people died and 300 were injured when four car bombs exploded in Dublin and Monaghan on May 17th, 1974.

No organisation claimed responsibility, but loyalist paramilitaries were blamed for the attacks.

The Commission of Investigation into the bombings was established in April 2005 under new legislation to fast-track inquiries. It was due to provide a final report within six months, but has applied for eight extensions in almost two years.

The terms of reference of the commission involve an inquiry into why the Garda investigation into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings was wound down in 1974.

He is also investigating why gardaí did not follow up a number of leads, which included information relating to a man who stayed in the Four Courts Hotel between May 15th and May 17th, and his contacts with the UVF; and information concerning a British army corporal allegedly sighted in Dublin at the time of the bombings.

Mr MacEntee and his officials are believed to have travelled outside the Republic to interview individuals.

The Justice for the Forgotten group, which campaigns on behalf of the victims of the atrocities, hopes the findings will be published before the Dáil takes its Easter break on April 5th.

The group also wants a debate on collusion in the Dáil and the Seanad before the general election.

The Cabinet is not holding its weekly meeting tomorrow because the Taoiseach and his ministers are travelling abroad to St Patrick's Day events.

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