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Haughey govt helped SAS - Adams

The three IRA members shot dead by the SAS in Gibraltar were gunned down after the Irish government passed on information about their movements, Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams claimed today.

Mairead Farrell (31), Danny McCann (30) and Sean Savage (23) all from west Belfast, were shot by undercover soldiers as they prepared to launch a car bomb attack on troops almost 20 years ago.

It was claimed the three had been under surveillance by British intelligence and the authorities in Spain who monitored their movements as they crossed the border into Gibraltar, apparently after arriving on a flight from Dublin.

All three were unarmed when they were shot and later a car with 140lbs of explosives was found.

The European Court of Human rights found they were unlawfully killed but said they were engaged in terrorism.

The late Charles Haughey was then taoiseach with the late Brian Lenihan as his foreign minister. Margaret Thatcher was in power at Downing St in what was one of the most turbulent times of the troubles.

Mr Adams said today: "It is my strong view that the killings in Gibraltar were authorised by Margaret Thatcher, and it is my strong view that the Irish government of the day passed information to the authorities about the movements of those killed.

"I cannot prove that, but that is my conviction."

Sinn Fein is planning a series of events to commemorate the deaths of the three as well as four killings which followed in related violence in Belfast in the days that followed.

IRA man Kevin McCracken (31) was shot dead by British soldiers and three mourners were killed by loyalist Michael Stone when he launched a gun and grenade attack at the Milltown Cemetery funerals of the Gibraltar victims.

The ruling body of the Northern Ireland Assembly is to decide whether an international women's day event organised by Sinn Fein MLA Jennifer McCann, commemorating Mairead Farrell will go ahead inside Parliament Buildings.

It will also make a decision on a request by Democratic Unionist MP Jeffrey Donaldson who has proposed an event in the Long Gallery to acknowledge the work of the SAS.

Launching events to mark the Gibraltar and Milltown events, Mr Adams said: "Mairead was a brave, lovely and wonderful Irishwoman. There was no intention to offend anyone by this event and certainly no intention to see Mairead's good name embroiled in a row which has more to do with the sense of unionism than anything else.

"It is a sense of grave insensitivity that a counter event to commemorate the work of the SAS has been mooted. We all know the role of the SAS. I think we must all calm down around this."

PA

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