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Last Updated: 27/04/2008 15:24

NI Assembly to debate McCord killing

Members of the Stormont Assembly were today urged to unite behind a motion expressing concern at claims that Royal Ulster Constabulary officers turned a blind eye to the murder of a north Belfast man 11 years ago.

As MLAs prepared to debate tomorrow a nationalist SDLP motion calling for the full truth about the murder of Raymond McCord Jnr, the party's Alban Maginness urged all parties to support it.

"There cannot be an acceptable face of terrorism," the North Belfast MLA said on the eve of the debate.

"There cannot be favoured factions within paramilitary murder gangs, and there can be no more collusion as there was in the past.

"The Police Ombudsman's report should be an impetus both to probe into and expose the truth of what state and paramilitary organisations did during the years of conflict and create means to heal the hurts of

the past and move forward, on an ethical basis. That is the way to go."

In January last year the then Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan and her team claimed RUC Special Branch did not stop a gang of loyalists they infiltrated in north Belfast from killing over a dozen people.

The Ulster Volunteer Force gang, which was riddled with informers, beat to death in 1997 Raymond McCord Jnr, a 22-year-old former RAF member, whose body was dumped in a quarry in Newtownabbey.

The Ombudsman's report, which was sparked by a complaint by Mr McCord's father Raymond Snr, claimed the gang also shot dead 27-year-old Sharon McKenna four years earlier as she visited an elderly friend.

It also claimed Special Branch officers did not stop other activities such as drug dealing, the stashing of guns and explosives and murder attempts.

Following the report, Mr McCord Snr called for a public inquiry to be set up into allegations that members of the security forces colluded with paramilitaries in a number of murders during the Troubles.

Mr Maginness commended Mr McCord Snr, who will attend tomorrow's debate, on his campaign for the full truth about his son's murder.

The debate will be also attended by the family of 21-year-old south Armagh man Paul Quinn who was beaten to death last October by a gang on an isolated farm in Co Monaghan.

The Quinn family, who will have a private meeting with Mr McCord, have blamed republicans for his murder.

PA

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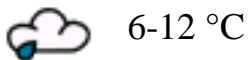Yes   No

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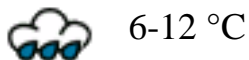
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