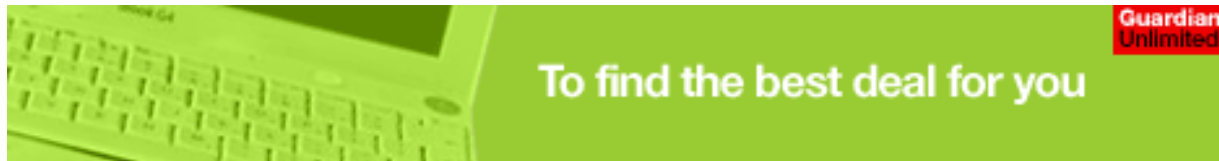


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UK**Churches' plea to IRA over
'disappeared'**

Henry McDonald, Ireland editor

Sunday January 7, 2007

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Catholic churches in Ireland are to unite in an appeal to the Provisional IRA for information about the remains of the 'disappeared'.

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Archbishop Sean Brady, the Catholic Primate of All Ireland, ordered the appeal in response to a request from the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains.

Churches in the Armagh diocese launched the campaign yesterday by publishing requests on parish noticeboards, with the rest of the country set to follow suit by the end of January. Appeals will be made at Sunday mass.

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The 'disappeared' are nine men and women believed kidnapped, murdered and buried in unmarked graves by the IRA as alleged informers. The bodies of only four have been recovered, including that of Belfast widow Jean McConville. Her remains were discovered in Co Louth, after the Provisional IRA released details in 1999 of where it claimed all nine were buried.

Anna McShane, whose father Charles Armstrong vanished in 1981 and is believed to have been killed, said: 'Before there can be any peace in Northern Ireland, these bodies need to be returned. For these families it is like a never-ending wake.'

'My mother is 77 and has spent 25 years trying to find him. I wouldn't want her to go to her grave without knowing where he is.'

Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, a commission member, said he was 'hopeful' that people would come forward with information. But he warned: 'These are murders carried out decades ago, probably at dead of night in wild country. The whole terrain has changed over those decades.'

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