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## News

# Abandon all collusion inquiries, say ex-cops

Sunday, June 17, 2007

Public inquiries into a series of high profile murders including those of solicitors Rosemary Nelson and Pat Finucane should be "set aside", according to calls from retired cops.

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Following a meeting last week of its executive, the NI Retired Police Officers' Association called for an end to inquiries that were "crucifying" the security forces.

The move follows concerns raised by Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Hain and Tory NI spokesman David Lidington about the runaway cost of Ulster's public inquiries.

In a call that may anger relatives of those people whose murders are to be examined by a series of public probes, NIRPOA chairman David Turkington said: "Our position, like many other eminent observers, is that public inquiries are no longer an appropriate means of dealing with the past.

"Those that are scheduled were agreed in a very different political climate and should now be set aside, as any proposed Study Group must have a fresh environment and could not be expected to deliver against a backdrop of daily media reporting on selected cases.

"There is also need for equity and fairness in respect of the thousands of security force victims, whose families are willing to look forward, but not on the basis of second-class citizens or one that reinforces a hierarchy of victimhood.

"It would be immoral and illogical to sustain a system which is intended to crucify our security forces, who made such sacrifices in delivering the transition to political development, whilst at the same time asking others to try to find a new inclusive process of truth and reconciliation."

His comments come after the Government last week published figures showing the cost of public inquiries. According to the figures, the bill for the Rosemary Nelson inquiry already stands at £15.1m, the inquiry into Robert Hamill's murder has cost £10.4m so far and the Billy Wright investigation costs have reached £7.2m.

Conservative NI spokesman David Lidington called for an overhaul of the inquiry system and to impose strict limits on inquiries already under way.

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