

**Northern Ireland assembly  
Tuesday 3 July 2007**

**Private Members Business  
Victims**

**Source:** <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/reports2007/070703.htm#3>

**Mr Speaker:** The Business Committee has agreed to allow up to one hour and 30 minutes for the debate. The proposer of the motion will have 10 minutes to propose and 10 minutes to make the winding-up speech. Other Members will have five minutes each.

Two amendments have been received and published on the Marshalled List. The proposers of the amendments will each have 10 minutes to propose and five minutes to make their winding-up speeches.

**Mr Elliott:** I beg to move

That this Assembly urges the Executive to implement the recommendations of the final report by the Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors, entitled 'Support for Victims and Survivors: Addressing the Human Legacy'.

I welcome the opportunity to move the motion. However, I must attend a Committee meeting this afternoon, and I may have to leave during the debate. I hope that Members appreciate that, but I will stay for as long as possible.

Over a generation, many horrific events occurred in Northern Ireland, and they have had an impact on the lives of many thousands of people in the Province. The ripples of those events, some of which happened decades ago, are felt to this day by the bereaved, the traumatised, the injured and the lonely.

Over the years, I have been in regular contact with victims and survivors, all of whom suffer in different ways — physically, emotionally, financially and psychologically. Unfortunately, the common denominator among many victims and survivors in Northern Ireland is that they feel that they have been forgotten. To many, the neglect of the past is a serious impediment that prevents them from moving successfully into the future. When talking to victims and survivors, the words "angry" and "frustrated" often arise. Who can blame them for having such feelings? Many victims and survivors have lived through the terrible pain of losing a loved one or of being injured.

There is some substance to the argument that no one who lived in Northern Ireland through the unhappiest period of its history will have escaped some damage. Many people who, fortunately, escaped death or injury have been exposed to threat and danger. Certain localities have experienced an enduring atmosphere of tension and menace. Social life has been constrained, and economic progress has been impeded.

Nevertheless, we must aim our efforts at considering the needs of a coherent and manageable target group. I define that group as the surviving injured, those who care for them and those close relatives who mourn their dead.

On 24 October 1997, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, announced that a commission was to be established:

"to look at possible ways to recognise the pain and suffering felt by victims of violence arising from the troubles of the last 30 years, including those who have died or been injured in the service of the community."

Compared to the darkest days of the Troubles, the decade since that announcement was made has, thankfully, been relatively free from violence. However, the victims issue is still in limbo. To the community's collective shame, it has been allowed to drift.

The report that stemmed from that announcement almost 10 years ago was Sir Kenneth Bloomfield's 'We Will Remember Them'. One of that report's 20 recommendations was that:

"victims must, as the barest minimum, be as well served as former prisoners in terms of their rehabilitation, future employment etc".

That clearly separates prisoners from victims. I strongly suggest that many victims would agree with that ideal, but it is still far from reality. Members only have to look round the Chamber to see many people who are victims or ex-prisoners.

The victims community had to wait until 2005 for the next significant development, when the Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors, Bertha McDougall, was appointed. That was a belated but positive step in the right direction; I hope that the community will not need to wait another eight to 10 years for the next significant progress on this issue.

Bertha McDougall's subsequent recommendations were formed after she and her team consulted a wide range of survivors, victims and groups representing victims' interests. Those 36 recommendations are therefore based on the needs of genuine victims and survivors. It is vital that the measures that she outlined should come into effect as soon as possible so that the needs of victims, which have hitherto received minimal attention, can be addressed.

I use the term "genuine victims" because the very definition of a victim is a difficult matter. No doubt some Assembly Members will have a definition of "victim" that is widely different from my own. Even Bertha McDougall indicated that there is no consensus on the definition in the community. I strongly urge that the interpretation and definition of the term "victim" is clearly defined. The real victims who have suffered at the hands of terrorists should not be merged into the same category as the perpetrators of violence, murder and mayhem. That would be a travesty of justice for those who have already suffered. Indeed, it would involve a re-traumatisation process for victims.

I have grave concerns that, during a recent meeting of the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister, the First Minister stated:

"The new Commissioner will not, of course, be bound by Mrs McDougall's recommendations".

I believe that it has been proven that the complex nature of the role requires not just a commissioner for victims, but a commission for victims. That role requires a small group of people; such matters should not be left to just one person.

I will be interested to hear from the proposer of amendment No 1 how the role of a commissioner — or, indeed, of a commission — would fit in with the bringing forward of proposals from the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister as soon as possible after the recess. I wait to hear that with some anticipation, as I must put on record my serious concern at allowing the process for dealing with victims to be left in the hands of people such as the Deputy First Minister and the junior Minister from his party, both of whom have a record that clearly speaks for itself.

Returning to the report of the Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors, I believe that the time lag that would be involved in further consultation would be unacceptable to the many people who are in need of immediate help and who are long overdue meaningful, tangible support. The fact that we are, as yet, unable even to put an accurate figure on the number of victims and

survivors in the Province shows how poorly advanced we are in providing for victims and survivors.

The Interim Commissioner's recommendations are divided into the three main areas of services, funding and the victims and survivors forum. I am pleased that dealing with trauma is at the top of the list of service priorities. The suggestion that the work should be done in conjunction with the recommendations of the Bamford Review can only be positive. We also need to be careful that we do not, as I mentioned earlier, end up with a process of the re-traumatisation of victims.

The issue of funding is, in many respects, self-explanatory. One need only listen to the personal stories of many victims to understand the extent to which many of them were poorly financially treated. Many women who became widows when their husbands were murdered had to take on extra employment to help to raise their young families. I know that money can never repay for the loss of a loved one, but that situation should never have happened.

I pay tribute to the many genuine groups in our community that carry out a positive role by helping victims. The South East Fermanagh Foundation deals very positively with victims in the County Fermanagh area.

The question of the forum outlined in the recommendations is an emotive one. If, or when, victims are ready to move to that position, they will need time and space, and I urge that they are not forced into something of which they do not wish to be a part. A key step to building a future that is more at ease is to acknowledge the past and address issues that have impacted on countless families in the intervening years.

Many victims are amazed that so much money can be spent on a small number of inquiries, with little or no effort being made to address their pain and suffering. Many victims have a different method of dealing with the past and the way in which they wish to proceed to the future. Some people want to expose everything from the past, and others want to move on with their future quietly, remembering the past in their own private way.

**Mr Campbell:** I beg to move amendment No 1: Leave out all after "urges" and insert

"the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister to bring forward proposals, after the summer recess, for a new policy for victims and survivors, having due regard to the recommendations in the Interim Commissioner's report 'Support for Victims and Survivors: Addressing the Human Legacy'."

The way in which we deal with victims is an emotive issue. Many victims exhibit a range of emotions, which is testament to their enduring problems. A reading of the Interim Commissioner for Victims' report highlights the problems that she faced. Nonetheless, she has produced a commendable report that addresses victims' issues and contains a range of recommendations, to which Mr Elliott has referred. The DUP amendment simply urges the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister to have due regard to those recommendations in the formulation of a new policy.

What can we do for the close relatives of those who have died? What can we do for those who continue to suffer because of terror and criminal activity? We will always struggle with those questions if we are unwilling to grapple with the definition of what is a genuinely innocent victim and what is not. As a society and as an Assembly, we must never equate the perpetrators of atrocities with the victims of atrocities. To take one example, it cannot be the case that Sean Kelly, who murdered innocent people in the Shankill bombing, is equated with those whom he murdered. That cannot be the case. Those who set out to take innocent life and perished at their own hand are not innocent victims. They are not innocent victims in 2007, and they will not be innocent victims in 2107, in spite of any amount of revisionism.

Some people try to dress up the problems of the past 30 years by describing that time as a “conflict”, as if, to a greater or lesser extent, we were all guilty of murder. We were not all guilty; the people who pulled the trigger or perished by their own hand were guilty — they are not innocent victims.

We need a clear definition of “innocent victim”. It does not matter on this side of the House whether people were Protestant, Catholic or any other religion; if they were in the wrong place at the wrong time and were murdered by a bomb or were shot dead, they were innocent victims and should be regarded as such.

If we get there, I am confident that there will be substantial desire for making progress and that there will be a foundation upon which we can build a future for the innocent victims. To do otherwise would compound the grief, anger and anguish that many victims’ relatives feel. They want to know that their relatives did not die in vain. They want to know that some progress can be made for all the community, given the sacrifice that their genuinely innocent relatives made.

2.15 pm

The report from the Interim Commissioner for Victims gives significant food for thought and a foundation upon which we can build. Unfortunately, we cannot stop people voting for those who murdered others in the past. That is their choice, but it will not change our opinion of what is an innocent victim. If certain people have to come to terms with their part in the past while they are dealing with the future, so be it. If their guilty conscience pricks them, so be it. They have to come to terms with their past. We must all move together into the future with a genuine regard for the innocent victims of the past.

**Mrs D Kelly:** I beg to move amendment No 2: At end insert

“; and further urges the establishment of a Victims’ and Survivors’ Forum.”

Despite the controversial manner in which Bertha McDougall was appointed, a process that not only did her an injustice but also called into question the public-appointment process, she has performed her duties creditably and with a great deal of sensitivity. Mrs McDougall was correct in her assessment of the Troubles when she said that:

“The real cost needs to be considered within the context of human suffering and the physical, emotional and psychological trauma inflicted on individuals and society as a whole.”

The previous two Members who spoke will acknowledge that the tears, trauma and psychological damage for those who survived remain the same regardless of how they became victims. All the families’ tears are the same.

Mrs McDougall referred to a forum for victims and survivors in the report. The SDLP has tabled the amendment because it strengthens the motion and gives a clear signal to victims and survivors that something will be done. I know that the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister hope to announce the appointment of a Commissioner for Victims before the end of this week. I trust that they will also give a commitment to establishing a forum.

There was consensus among those who were consulted that a forum would be positively received by victims and survivors. Victims and survivors want a forum to address a range of practical issues; in the report, Mrs McDougall made specific recommendations for financial support and access to health services. A forum could also act as a platform to enable victims and survivors to come together and have a voice on aspects that they believe are not being dealt with. They would be able to tell politicians what their needs are, where the gaps are and how they could be filled. A forum should be independent, effective, inclusive, accountable and productive,

and it should enable victims and survivors to share their experiences and co-ordinate good practice.

In the report, Mrs McDougall tells of the importance of storytelling and how she sees a forum enabling people to tell their story. I recently met with the family of a victim — a mother whose husband was murdered by the UVF because he was a Catholic and whose youngest daughter was two years old at the time. Looking at the financial contribution that society should make, a judge said that the child was too young to know the loss of a father. That was clearly wrong. In my constituency, there are fathers who lost sons and were so traumatised by the brutal nature of the murders that they had to give up work and lost their homes as a result.

The loss of a loved one therefore has a wider impact, as there are everyday issues to deal with. Those stories must be told, because we all need to hear them.

In her report, the Interim Commissioner adopted a needs-based approach, which deftly allowed her to avoid creating priorities or perceived alignments. That approach also allowed her to produce a report that can be welcomed by all Members. To oppose the report would be to oppose any further discussion of a fund for widows of members of the UDR and to oppose improvement in mental-health provision for all our children.

The report draws attention to transgenerational post-traumatic stress disorder, identification and diagnosis of which will be essential if the North is to succeed. We can create a stable peace, but the next generation must not be left with mental scarring that could prevent them from maintaining that peace. A co-ordinated and comprehensive response from Government, which should include the border regions, will be required to address that issue.

The Commissioner drew attention to that fact that victims' services tend to be centred around Belfast. I welcome her commitments to provide outreach services and to decentralise conflict transformation. That issue was not born in Belfast; neither will it rest there. Victims who live in rural areas have specific needs that must be addressed, not soaked up with promises of better transport provision.

Dealing with victims' needs can be viewed as also dealing with their societal needs. For example, the Government need to learn how to tackle mistrust among victims. In doing so, they would gain favour from everyone in the Chamber. Each side of the community feels that the other side is better treated on the issue of victims. Co-ordinated information and a cross-community approach should therefore help the rest of society. It would also create models of best practice that could be applied elsewhere.

The report also addressed the issue of the past, and the Interim Commissioner quite rightly noted the hurt and the anger that would exist if a line were to be drawn under the past. However, she also recognised the difficulty that exists in any truth recovery process. Victims should not be railroaded — it is important to be sensitive to, and cognisant of, their needs. There have been pleas from across the Chamber that not all victims are equal. However, the establishment of a forum for victims and survivors is a must. As an Assembly, we must show political leadership at an early stage and let the victims lead us to the right place from which to tackle this issue.

**Mr Molloy:** Go raibh maith agat, a Cheann Comhairle. I support amendment No 1 and oppose the motion.

This is a highly sensitive issue that should not be used as a political football. That is why it is important to recognise the issues faced by victims. Many victims feel that they have been forgotten, and that the issues that they have raised over the years have not come to the fore in any of the victims' reports that have been published. Many victims feel sidelined as a result.

It is therefore important not to rush into implementing Bertha McDougall's report. Amendment No 1 would allow the issue to be considered in the long term. As a new Victims' Commissioner has yet to be appointed, it would be premature to implement the Interim Commissioner's report, as that would tie the hands of her successor. It is important to consider the issue in the long term and to develop a new strategy for victims, rather than simply repeating what has already happened.

Many victims had serious reservations about Bertha McDougall's appointment. There were also concerns about the consultation on the report, and about the report itself and how it was finalised. Those important concerns should be addressed, because the report's conclusions clearly dealt with victims from one side of the community. The report also concentrated on aspects of security. It did not deal with issues faced by victims from all sides, and the different roles that victims can have. As I said, it would be premature to implement the report's recommendations now, without due consideration and without allowing the new Commissioner to address those issues.

The British Government must also acknowledge the role that they played in the Troubles —

**Mrs D Kelly:** Will the Member give way?

**Mr Molloy:** No. The Member has had an opportunity to say all that she wanted to say. I shall use my time to do the same.

We must start to acknowledge the issues involved, as well as the many thousands of victims of collusion and state violence who were not taken into account in the findings in the Interim Commissioner for Victims' report. Victims need equality of treatment. There should not be a hierarchy of victims, yet there appear to be many interpretations of the meaning of "victim".

We must examine the role that state violence played in the lives of so many families. Probably thousands of individuals and hundreds of families were affected by it. There was collusion, and people were set up by members of the security forces themselves. A structure was in place that directed and drove those members of the security forces. Even last week, we had a situation in which it was clear that there was a case to be answered, yet the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) decided not to prosecute anyone. Those people will now go free. There will be no justice for their victims, yet it is clear that collusion occurred between state forces and loyalist paramilitaries.

Not only did the security forces not stop killings from happening when they had prior knowledge of them, in one instance they even handed the gun back to loyalist paramilitaries to let another six people be murdered by it.

Victims have serious concerns about how they have been treated. Amendment No 1 deals with the present situation and looks to a new situation. If it is made, the First and Deputy First Ministers and the new Victims' Commissioner will be urged to deal with the victims issue, taking into account the Interim Commissioner for Victims' recommendations. We will have in place a new policy for dealing with victims and survivors that will meet their needs.

If amendment No 2 is made, however, we will be deciding in advance that victims should have a forum. Surely we should not be dictating to victims what structure any outlet for their views should take. Instead, let us put the matter out to consultation, talk to the victims, consider their needs and see how we can accommodate them to ensure that their needs are recognised in future. Go raibh maith agat.

**Dr Farry:** It is important to stress that, up until now, the needs of victims, and the past generally, have been dealt with piecemeal and divisively. Judging by the debate so far, we are in danger of continuing along that path. We must try to deal with victims holistically and comprehensively, recognising the diverse range of needs and the different levels of support and funding that are

available. We must also consider the diverse demands of justice versus truth recovery. We need to introduce a policy that is capable of proceeding in a manner that promotes reconciliation and that is consistent with building a shared future, rather than one that will become a political football and perpetuate people's suffering.

Like others, I pay tribute to Bertha McDougall's work as Interim Commissioner for Victims. Notwithstanding the controversy surrounding her appointment, her work was comprehensive, and she had direct dealings with victims' groups from right across the political spectrum. Her report reflects what she heard from them. In many respects, the report is not simply Bertha McDougall's report but a report from the whole range of victims across Northern Ireland.

It is important that we do not get caught up in trying to define a victim. If we do, we are unlikely to get past stage one. One point that I wish to stress, however, is that a wide range of people can be considered to be victims, and victims can also be perpetrators. People who were killed while engaging in terrorism still left a family grieving over their passing. That said, that does not prevent society from saying, rightly, that what those people were engaged in was fundamentally wrong and that those who survived should have been amenable under the law for what they did. Those who passed away would undoubtedly have been answerable under the law had they survived. I do not think that those aspects are mutually exclusive.

2.30 pm

There has been talk of a hierarchy of victims. Both sides of the community are guilty of producing different hierarchies of victims: one seeks to deny victimhood to other sections of the community; the other elevates victims of state violence above all others. We must move away from those different interpretations.

The Interim Victims Commissioner's report is largely based on individual victims' needs. However, there are many wider issues that the report does not deal with in much detail. That said, the report is a valuable piece of work that fits into the broad spectrum of issues that we need to address, such as support for health, benefits, access to funding for individuals and groups, and the wider issue of the victims' forum. The report has reflected that there have been major deficiencies in those areas over the last number of years.

The report makes particular mention that people who suffered during the very early years of the Troubles have been badly neglected and let down. As time has progressed, we have become much more sophisticated in recognising the trauma and mental-health difficulties that people have faced. However, there is a large backlog of work that must be addressed. Many people have been suffering in silence for many years, and it is time that we recognised what they have gone through, and address their needs.

There are also broader issues that we must consider, such as the day of reflection, how we acknowledge the past in general, addressing people's demands for justice, and how realistic that will be, given that limited resources are available.

**Mr Storey:** Will the Member indicate how he can believe in a day of reflection, when, in society and in this House, there is a party that still believes that what some people did during the Troubles was right? How can that circle be squared? Some people would not reflect on a basis of sorrow, but on the basis that it was unfortunate that some people happened to be caught up in what occurred?

**Dr Farry:** I thank the Member for that intervention. I was referring to the Healing Through Remembering group's day of reflection, which is a private day of reflection that is designed to be inclusive. People participate in whatever manner they wish. Over time, perhaps we can move on. However, I fully recognise Mr Storey's point that people have certain feelings about those who were responsible for many things that happened during the Troubles.

Truth recovery is an important issue that needs to be considered. The forum proposed in the Interim Victims' Commissioner's report suggested the issue of support and funding as a starting point, with the possibility of moving on. We must also bear in mind the commission that was set up by the previous Secretary of State, headed by Robin Eames and Denis Bradley. The commission will seek to devise a more holistic approach to the past. Consideration will need to be given to how the work of that body will fit in with that of the Interim Victims' Commissioner and her successor, and whatever initiatives the Executive wish to take forward to support that. It must be a wide-ranging process.

**Mr Spratt:** I support the amendment in the name of my colleague Gregory Campbell, and reaffirm my support of the substance of the substantive motion.

This House has a duty to the victims of our past. With that in mind, I commend the work of the Interim Victims' Commissioner, Bertha McDougall. In producing her report, Mrs McDougall has been a fair and impartial advocate of the rights and needs of victims, and she should be applauded by all Members for her dedication and hard work. The report provides, for the first time, a real and meaningful support structure for victims and their families. That is to be welcomed.

A legacy of hurt and suffering as a result of the terrorist campaign in Northern Ireland was —and, indeed, is — a difficult issue to tackle. For many, it is probably a question of where to start. However, in Mrs McDougall's report, there is a positive framework and recommendations that, I believe, can make a real and tangible difference to the lives of victims. The fact that the report is driven and moulded by the victim's voice makes it a suitable guideline to dealing with victims of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Who would know better than the victims themselves?

The three main areas of the report — funding, services, and the establishment of a forum — cover the broad concerns and desires of victims.

Long-term funding is vital, both for the individuals and the dedicated hard-working victims' groups who, despite struggling with financial sustainability, provide invaluable support to those who are in need. We must ensure that adequate resources are made available, and I welcome the proposals in the report of the Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors for a flexible long-term funding strategy.

The report is right to state that current funding has proved inadequate to meet identified needs. It is dangerous for groups to rely too heavily on peace funding. Rather than money being directed to those ex-prisoners' associations that comprise many who created the victims, we should always give priority support to those who have suffered. Victims should be able to avail of assistance in applying for funds, and, indeed, when an application is made, it should be dealt with sensitively and with flexibility.

The Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors recommends that those who have been mentally scarred by our past have their needs provided for. Accredited counselling services are a must as we seek to give those who need help the standard of support that they deserve. An effective delivery model must be implemented and given the necessary financial resources to comprehensively deliver what is required. The Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister must at all times give the necessary support to ensure that there is delivery. I agree with the report's recommendation that, as a matter of urgency, a new fund be established to cater for the needs of victims. Financial gain can never compensate for physical loss or suffering, but we should provide for those who have lost so much.

For too long, the victim's voice has not been given the platform that it deserves. I welcome the recommendation to establish a forum, and I encourage OFMDFM to press ahead with



implementing that. The DUP believes that victims' voices should be heard and that we should provide the means to make that possible.

Amendment No 1 does not detract from the report's recommendations. We seek to create an opportunity to add further provisions to ensure that victims get the best possible outcomes as the situation evolves. I support the call to implement the report of the Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors, but I firmly believe that amendment No 1 gives us an opportunity to further widen the scope of provisions.

Victims may be victims of the past, but they must be cared for and provided for in the future. Victimhood never ends. We must make the hurt and pain easier to live with on a day-to-day basis. I support amendment No 1.

**Mr Speaker:** I remind Members that a ruling was made several weeks ago that if Members speak for fewer than five minutes and take an intervention, they will be allowed an extra minute to speak. It is important that we continually say that; I know that Members are beginning to rush through their speeches as they watch the clock.

**Ms J McCann:** I oppose the motion, and I support amendment No 1. I also support my party colleague Mr Francie Molloy.

The discussion on the victims and survivors of the conflict is very sensitive and emotive. We are speaking of the people who have lost their lives in this conflict, and we are speaking in particular about their relatives — the survivors who, every day of the week, have to live with the trauma of their bereavement. The circumstances of the death of the person concerned should mean little to us. Our priority and focus should be to ensure that all relatives are treated with respect and that every effort is made to support them all. I object — and I know that many relatives also object — to any notion of a hierarchy of victims, and the idea that some relatives are less deserving than others, simply because the circumstances surrounding the death of their loved one do not fit some people's biased political outlook.

Over the years, there have been many examples of relatives and relatives' organisations being insulted and abused by those speaking on behalf of political parties outside this Chamber. Families who are the victims of state violence and collusion feel that they have been demonised because they dare to seek the truth about how their loved ones died.

The combined actions of the British state and loyalist forces are responsible for 1,414 deaths. That figure represents a little over 39% of the total number of those listed as having been killed. Some of those deaths include young children who were killed by plastic bullets, yet the British Government have never acknowledged the hurt and pain that they were responsible for in their dealings with the relatives of those who were killed.

Accountability, truth and justice are paramount for all those who have been affected by state, and state-sponsored, violence. It is now firmly established in the public domain that the British Government armed loyalists and that British intelligence agencies directed them to kill people. That is what collusion was all about: it was part of the British Government's military offensive against nationalists. The British Government's use of loyalists gave cover to their armed forces to secretly operate in an illegal arena in which the Crown forces could not be publicly seen or risk being caught. It is obvious to most reasonable people what the British Government were at, and the British Government must accept that fact.

The past decade has seen investigations into collusion by highly respected individuals motivated to uncover the truth surrounding state approved and directed murder campaigns. Lord Stephens conducted three investigations; Canadian judge Peter Cory investigated collusion, and Nuala O'Loan, the Police Ombudsman, produced a damning report that exposed the intimate, friendly and deadly relationship between RUC Special Branch and loyalists.

Recently, the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) announced that no serving or retired members of the British Crown forces will be prosecuted for their involvement in the murder of seven people — one Protestant, six Catholics — including the human rights lawyer Pat Finucane. That decision and the manner in which the PPS informed the families concerned caused great offence and hurt. Those benefiting from the decision were involved in those murders and are in high office inside the British political and military establishment.

Families who have been directly affected by the policy of collusion are entitled to the truth about why a state agency that is supposed to uphold the law and protect citizens was instrumental in killing their loved ones. The dignity with which those families have conducted their campaign to uncover the truth, and the determination that they have shown when political representatives have attempted to trivialise that campaign by engaging in the politics of denial, has to be commended.

Nowhere in Bertha McDougall's report is there any mention of collusion or acknowledgement by the British state of its responsibility for and its role as a protagonist in the conflict. The British Government need to acknowledge and take on board the feelings and sensitivities of all victims, particularly the victims of collusion and state violence.

**Mr Beggs:** Will the Member give way?

**Ms J McCann:** No, I will not give way. I am nearly finished.

If we are to move to a society that is based on equality and justice and where human rights are respected, then we should not fear the truth. The families of all victims of the conflict deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. There must never be a hierarchy of victims. When taking forward initiatives relating to victims and survivors, we should take our lead from the victims and their families and endeavour to make a positive contribution towards helping them come to terms with their circumstances.

**Mr Storey:** I support the amendment.

The DUP appreciates the work that was carried out by Bertha McDougall. The Government have indicated that the report by the Interim Victims' Commissioner is the platform on which victims' services should be built.

On 7 February 2007, in a Written Answer to a Question from Mr Dodds, which asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he made of the most recent report by the Interim Victims' Commissioner, David Cairns stated:

"I welcome Bertha McDougall's report as a detailed and thorough examination of the key issues affecting victims and survivors.

It provides a good platform for the incoming permanent victim's commissioner to work on."

2.45 pm

The 36 recommendations put forward by the Interim Commissioner for Victims provide comprehensive coverage of a wide range of needs that victims across Northern Ireland have and the problems that many of them face. Funding is one of the key areas covered by the recommendations in the report, which, rightly, highlights the importance of long-term funding for individuals and victims' groups. I want to place on record that I believe that the pittance given to victims of violence in Northern Ireland, to date, is a disgrace, considering that millions have been squandered on the Bloody Sunday Inquiry. That discrimination and inequality must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Victims' groups across Northern Ireland say that their work is hampered because they do not have the certainty of funding. Valuable time and effort is taken up trying to secure funding rather than delivering the service that victims require. The importance of funding to victims is highlighted by the fact that 24 of the 36 recommendations in the report relate to that particular issue.

The proposal that consideration be given to the establishment of a UDR fund, similar to the Northern Ireland Police Fund, is one that is warmly welcomed by many in this House. When the UDR was amalgamated with the Royal Irish Rangers to become the Royal Irish Regiment (RIR), it was the largest serving regiment in the Army and had been on active service longer than any regiment since the Napoleonic wars. The men and women who served in the UDR were on the front line and at the forefront of protecting the community, and they suffered heavily at the hands of terrorists.

Between 1 April 1970 and 30 June 1992, 197 UDR soldiers and officers were murdered. Sixty-one ex-soldiers were murdered after leaving the regiment, and a further five UDR soldiers who transferred to the RIR were killed after the merger with the Royal Irish Rangers on 1 July 1992.

The first of those to be killed was Mr Robert Irvine from my constituency of North Antrim. He was taken out and shot in front of his family. The sad reality is that I have asked this question numerous times in this House, and there has been silence from the party that is sitting opposite: does it believe that the murder of people like Robert Irvine, who was on his way home from a hard day's work, was legitimate, right and justifiable? All those in their right mind know that that is not the case.

There are those in this House who claim that they were commanders of the Provos during the time that people were being murdered in this country. Today, a Sinn Féin Member said that those in high office in the British Establishment must be held accountable. I say that, equally, those who hold high office in this Assembly must be held accountable for what they have done in the past. Furthermore, there should be no ground given or taken.

More than 40,000 people have served in the ranks of the UDR, and there is no doubt that many former members of the regiment require the kind of help and service that is provided by the Northern Ireland Police Fund to former police officers. While the UDR Benevolent Fund does invaluable work —

**Mr Speaker:** The Member's time is almost up.

**Mr Storey:** — it could be enhanced and developed further through the establishment of a UDR fund. I support the motion.

**Mr O'Loan:** I welcome the motion. It has been unhelpful that there were those who saw the issue of victims as belonging to one or other community. That was a false division and led to many problems. However, discussing the issue together can be a step towards resolving those problems, although not all of today's debate has been constructive in that regard, and I may return to that point.

I begin by drawing attention to the need for urgency with regard to the full implementation of the report's recommendations.

One of the most important of the recommendations, to which another Member referred, is that which advocates a better replacement for the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund by the end of 2007. It is now July, and the restored Assembly approaches its first recess. The harmony with which the memorial fund is phased out and its replacement developed will impact on the success of what is to come. I urge the Executive to note that and to act without hesitation.

The ideas set out in Bertha McDougall's report are balanced and stand to benefit everyone. They do not depend on which model of truth recovery is adopted. Therefore, I urge the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister not to wait for the consultative group's report on the past. That would not be in anyone's interest, except perhaps anyone who fears the recovery of the truth. It certainly would not be in the interests of victims, and they must come first.

A central message of the report revolves around the need for a victims and survivors' forum, one that the SDLP argues should be independent, effective and inclusive. There has been great progress on equality, as both communities come to realise that they gain from it. That should also be the case when it comes to acknowledging and addressing the needs of victims.

The report contains some horrifying statistics on the numbers of injured and bereaved. It makes clear that everyone is the product of the Troubles and that, in one sense, we all need help. However, the Assembly must start by helping the people in most need — those who feel the deepest hurt because of what the Assembly has done or has failed to do. I urge the House to support the motion and amendment No 2.

**Mr McGlone:** Members have listened intently to a discussion on the victims of violence. Does the Member agree that more Catholics were murdered by the Provisional IRA than by the combined activities of the British Crown forces? Rightly, the subject of collusion between British Crown forces and loyalist paramilitaries has been raised. However, Members must give similar consideration to the collusion between the senior ranks of those forces and the Provisional movement — collusion that unscrupulously sent IRA volunteers into an SAS gun ambush.

**Mr O'Loan:** Mr McGlone has made valid points that tie in with what I hope to say on the broader issue of dealing with the past.

I have concerns about amendment No 1's reference to a "new policy" and merely having "due regard to the recommendations" of the report rather than its implementation.

Anyone who reads a history of Ireland over the past 200 or 300 years can only be amazed by the degree to which it is repetitive. By simply changing the names, the history of 100 and 200 years ago can seem like the history of the recent past. People seemed to be caught in a vicious circle from which there was no escape — until recently. There is every chance that future historians will describe the events from 26 March to 8 May 2007 as having had truly historic import. However, the process is ongoing and is still to be tested.

Some say that, in the context of the Assembly and the dramatic events of the past few weeks, a line should now be drawn under the past. We dare not do that. The consultative group has been set up, but there are strong signals that some want its function to be to close the door on the past. To use Seamus Heaney's metaphor, the scaffolding should not be removed until the wall is securely built.

The wall is not yet securely built. Dealing with the past properly is vital for reconciliation in society. What happens in the Assembly and the business of dealing with the past are intimately connected. The Assembly must send out signals — and I hope that those will be united signals — as to how it wants that process to move forward. Those two elements are potentially mutually reinforcing and, therefore, also potentially mutually destructive.

Ultimately, the Assembly will not progress well or successfully without a sound process to deal with the past. Equally, those who work on dealing with the past will not succeed unless the Assembly works as a co-operative political environment. A direct expression of support for the victims, as stated in the motion and in amendment No 2, and the establishment of a broad process for dealing with the past combine to complete the entire picture.

In a way, we are all victims in this deeply hurt, fractured society; putting it together again will be a huge task. A huge responsibility rests with the Assembly and every Member who speaks in it.

**The First Minister (Rev Dr Ian Paisley):** I would like to start by giving my personal commitment and that of the Executive that dealing with the hurt, pain and anguish of the victims in our Province is to us an absolute priority.

We have listened for many years to the stories of those who have lost loved ones. I have seen at first hand the tears shed by mothers, spouses and children. A terrible legacy of loss and pain has been borne by our people.

I have a clear message to those victims who still suffer: you are not forgotten, nor will you ever be forgotten. I have discovered that tears have no political colour and no religious colour. They are all tears — tears from the anguish of broken hearts and everlasting partings.

Victims and survivors are part of our society; their problems are our problems; their issues are our issues; and their concerns are our concerns. How we deal with victims and survivors will not be an additional task for the Assembly and the Administration: it will be the central task to which we must apply ourselves, and it will test the resolve of all parts of this Government and the public sector to provide adequate help and support.

I have listened to the many contributions today. I treat with contempt the remarks by the Member from Enniskillen. They are not worthy of comment. The depth of feeling and sympathy that the Members of this House hold for victims should be clear to them. This is an important issue, and there is an enormous responsibility on us to get it right.

I assure the House that the Office of the First and the Deputy First Minister is working to address that difficult issue. We hope to appoint a new Victims Commissioner shortly. The Commissioner will ensure that the voices of victims are heard, and he, or she, will take forward the establishment of a victims' and survivors' forum to support the work. The Commissioner will also carry out a work programme. That programme will be agreed between myself and the Deputy First Minister to ensure that victims' and survivors' issues remain firmly on the agenda. The programme will be developed in consultation with the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister. We look forward to working with the Committee in — I was going to say, collusion, if I would dare use that word — the interests of all our people.

There are three things that we need to keep in mind. The first is services and practical help for victims; the second is dealing with the legacy of the past; and the third is building a better future.

We want to make greater progress in providing services that will address the anguish that afflicts our people. We also want to make sure that we meet the basic practical needs of those who have suffered and those who care for those who suffer. Carers need our sympathy, our help and our support.

3.00 pm

In some cases, all people need is recognition that they are not forgotten, and that there is someone who understands what they have gone through. In other cases, practical help is needed, such as befriending services that can alleviate feelings of isolation, or information so that people know where to seek more specialised help. Those people must know that that help is theirs by right — they are entitled to it, and we, as citizens, have a duty to give them help that meets their needs.

The new strategy for victims will direct available resources to the areas of greatest need; it will emphasise the importance of ensuring that what is done by all service providers makes a real

difference to the lives of victims. However, such work can be taken forward only on the basis of much better information on victims' needs.

Mechanisms must be in place to ensure that individuals, victims and survivors' groups can play their parts. Moreover, we must recognise the importance of those groups in the process. With that in mind, we will ensure that their efforts are appropriately directed and that they can plan ahead with confidence, knowing that finance will be made available to help them meet their aims. That means working with them in the context of a clear financial framework.

In dealing with the legacy of the past, Members will be aware of the recent initiative that was announced by the former Secretary of State Peter Hain. I do not wish to comment on that now, but I want to emphasise that this Assembly must be fully engaged in the consideration of the past. It is our past; it is not Peter Hain's past, or the past of previous Secretaries of State — good, bad or indifferent. It is our past, and we must face up to it.

**Mr D Bradley:** Will the First Minister give way?

**The First Minister:** No, I will not give way, for I have no time. I am sorry, but for a preacher to run out of time is the greatest sin in the world.

Our approach must also take account of the need to move towards a new and less divided future. Many victims may feel that recent political developments mean that their pain and hurt will be forgotten. Some may feel that they are being treated as obstacles to be pushed aside in some rush towards a future in which they will play no part. I wish to make it absolutely clear that victims have a very important part to play in building a better future, and that we have no intention of forgetting their suffering.

In conclusion, detailed proposals for a new strategy for victims and survivors will be brought forward early in the autumn. As I said, those proposals will cover services for victims, the legacy of the past, and the part that victims will play in building a better future. We wish to see those proposals considered in Committee as soon as that is practicable. Moreover, we wish to engage fully with the Committee in mapping the way ahead so that real improvements can be made in that important area.

I ask the Assembly to extend its understanding to us, and to the new Commissioner for Victims, when he or she is appointed, in facing the challenges ahead. I know that there are many differences of opinion: we are not so unrealistic as to expect universal support on everything.

I pay tribute to the considerable and hard work of the Interim Commissioner for Victims, Mrs Bertha McDougall. The work that she has completed will prove invaluable as a foundation for moving forward.

The Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles' report has been roundly welcomed by many involved in the victims sector, and I thank Mrs Bertha McDougall sincerely for all that she has achieved.

We cannot, and would not, insist that those who have suffered should do anything that goes against their deepest feelings. At the same time, with the new devolved Administration, there is a real opportunity to take new and bold approaches that would not have been possible under direct rule. We must seize this opportunity and ensure that we bring energy, commitment and the deepest sympathy to this job, and, please God, with His help, we shall succeed.

**Mr Attwood:** I thank all the Members who have contributed to this difficult and demanding topic. I cannot respond to every comment, so I will seek a broad thrust around some of what has been said.

When he opened the debate, Tom Elliott was right to say that there is deep anger and frustration among victims and survivors, and that addressing their issues has been allowed to drift and drift. That is why the SDLP tried to put a hard edge on the UUP motion by calling for the establishment of a forum for victims and survivors. I reassure Tom Elliott, and everyone else, that in making that call, the SDLP is not saying — as some might suggest — that people should be railroaded into a victims' forum, or that all victims have to gather together and face each other. That is not the point. In creating a victims' forum, victims and survivors will be allowed to define how they want to engage, or not, with each other.

I assure Tom Elliott that the SDLP has a number of formulations on how the forum for victims and survivors would work in order to give them the strength to be the alpha and omega in facing the difficult choices that they, the Assembly, and others will have to make over the next few years.

As usual, Sinn Féin gave a partial version of history and the truth of the past. That was best characterised by Jennifer McCann's contribution. She commented on the British having launched a military offensive against the nationalist people, a sentiment with which, to some degree, I concur, but she — and Francie Molloy — failed to refer to the IRA's paramilitary offensive against the Irish people over the past 30 or 40 years. That was a missed opportunity, and Sinn Féin must reflect on that.

I have some sympathy with Francie Molloy's comments about the scandalous decision that the Public Prosecution Service made last week on the Stevens inquiry. That was a denial of the truth and a suppression of the past, and it does nothing to heal our divisions. I say to Sinn Féin that when the British and the Public Prosecution Service decided on that course of action, they showed that they had learned well. They reintroduced the essence of autumn 2005 regarding the on-the-runs and state-killings proposals, which were welcomed and justified by Sinn Féin, even though they would have allowed any member of the police or Army who was guilty of a serious scheduled offence to not have to face one day in prison, see their victims in open court, or account in any proper way for the actions for which they were responsible.

Last week, the Public Prosecution Service buried the Stevens inquiry because the political system knew that others had previously justified such an approach to dealing with the past and with the truth.

At this late stage, for the reasons outlined by Dolores Kelly, the DUP should support the SDLP's amendment. It would send out an immediate and strong message to victims and survivors that they will be at the heart of anything that happens over the next year, either in the Assembly or in the study group chaired by Lord Eames and Denis Bradley.

Jimmy Spratt said that he would encourage the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister to press ahead with the recommendation for a forum and to provide the means to do so. From the First Minister's comments, I understand that his Office would take the proposal forward. Let us remove any doubts and create certainty. Let us send a message to victims and survivors today that, whatever else may happen, a victims' and survivors' forum — that Sinn Féin said should be established in the long term — will be established in anything but the long term.

The overarching reason for such a forum is that many people are trying to ensure that Denis Bradley and Archbishop Eames make proposals that do not deal with the past through a proper inquiry. For such people, that would be a bridge too far. By establishing a victims' and survivors' forum, the Assembly would send out the message that it does not believe that to be the case.

**Mr Shannon:** After reading the comprehensive report by Bertha McDougall, which several Members mentioned, one's heart could not fail to be troubled by the plight of those who still suffer the side effects of terrorist violence after many years. Indeed, for many of us those hurts are real and personal, in the Chamber and outside it.

We always remember those who have gone on before us and those families that were left to grieve or to take care of a loved one or those who were left with horrendous injuries of body or mind. There is no way to change what has been done. That is not to say that those people should be left to face their difficulties alone, every day. Mrs McDougall's report tries to address those issues. The DUP is happy to support the SDLP amendment; we feel that it complements ours.

It is important to know what is happening with victims and with the memorial fund: in the past three years, £11 million has been allocated to the memorial fund; and over the past nine years, £44 million has been allocated to victims. Fifty-five million pounds shows the financial commitment to what we are trying to achieve.

Mrs McDougall's report makes many valid points and recommendations, and I will highlight a few that I feel are pertinent and important. The physical effects of the Troubles are saddening as we see those who were maimed, blinded or otherwise affected. Those are only the physical side effects of the bombings, kidnappings and shootings; the emotional trauma and the psychological damage, although hidden from the naked eye, are no less devastating.

We must have compassion for those who are hurting, whether physically or emotionally. The mentality in the Province has always been the stiff upper lip, grin and bear it, and do not think about it. Do not think about holding your best friend in your arms as he died; do not think about the children of those who have been murdered, standing by the graveside in bewilderment and grief; do not think about the bodies with dismembered limbs; do not think about searching frantically to find the person who is screaming under the rubble. Just do not think at all.

For too long that mentality has reigned, leaving a generation of men and women trapped in living nightmares. They are trying to move on but are held back by something that they cannot control. They are thrown into a world of pain and turmoil by flashbacks that are triggered by something that others would consider trivial — a car door being slammed, a loud shout, running feet or fireworks — yet devastating to them. They may be everyday occurrences, but they renew a bitter experience from the victim's past.

**Mrs D Kelly:** Does the Member agree that it would be remiss of us, when speaking about victims and survivors, not to mention the disappeared and the fact that their families do not have a grave to visit? Every day, for them, is a living nightmare.

**Mr Shannon:** I thank the Member for her timely intervention. I agree, as we all do — at least, on one side of the Chamber — with her. The ripples affect the spouse, the family and the relatives, who only want to help but who are unsure of the victim's mood. They feel helpless as their loved one suffers.

The report shows the importance of a strategy for those suffering from emotional and mental torture to provide them with a dedicated, qualified staff who can offer help. However, as I said earlier, that needs substantial funding.

Simply talking to someone who understands can make a positive difference to a person's life, and ease the pain just a little. I urge the immediate implementation of a strategy to enable doctors to refer people to specialist professionals who deal with issues resulting from the Troubles. That would replace the sometimes hit-and-miss nature of past efforts.

3.15 pm

I was particularly encouraged by my colleague Mervyn Storey's comments on the UDR fund. It is good that such a fund is being promoted. Many of us who served in the UDR and whose friends and colleagues in the regiment were murdered will look forward to the establishment of that fund and the opportunities that it will create.



Many of us have lost friends or relatives. I well remember the Ballydugan four, who were murdered outside Downpatrick. They were friends of mine from the Newtownards and Ballywalter areas. Those memories are important for all of us. My cousin Kenneth Smyth and his Roman Catholic colleague, both of whom were members of the UDR, were also murdered. As an SDLP Member said, the IRA killed more of its co-religionists than any other group did.

There are no easy solutions to victims' problems. The people who suffered will never be able to fully disengage from their experiences. Throwing money at the issue will not change things, but it certainly helps. Funding can ease the burden for bereaved families. It can provide essential, dedicated care to show that we will neither forget nor leave behind those victims. I support both amendments. I also hope that the recommendations of the Interim Commissioner's report will result in the immediate release of funding and implementation of the victims' strategy.

**Mr Kennedy:** I thank all Members who have contributed to this important debate. It has, at times, been a difficult discussion. In last week's debate on pension provision for RUC reservists, I said that there was unfinished business from the Troubles. Nowhere is that more true than in dealing with the victims of the conflict. Proper provision for victims must be made. We need a coherent, comprehensive and well-thought-out approach to address one of the great legacy issues of our time.

We realise that we can never fully compensate anyone for the loss of a loved one — even our best efforts will never be good enough. However, we are very fortunate to have at our disposal a clear road map in the form of the report produced under the expert supervision of Mrs Bertha McDougall, the Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles. I join others in paying tribute to her for the highly professional, well-thought-out and well-researched report that she has produced. Mrs McDougall was uniquely qualified for the task and, in spite of much personal abuse and totally unwarranted and uncalled-for criticism, she produced a worthy report, which I commend.

I turn to the report's recommendations. I am grateful to victims' groups in my constituency for sharing their views with me on important issues such as better co-ordination between statutory agencies, especially those in the health sector, and the role of general practitioners and other medical professionals who give ongoing advice and assistance. Many people remain deeply scarred by their experiences, and we must urgently consider how best to address their problems.

**Mrs I Robinson:** Will the Member give way?

**Mr Kennedy:** Unfortunately, I do not have enough time.

Many victims remain concerned about the overly bureaucratic nature of the services provided by statutory agencies. We must ensure that bureaucracy is replaced by a lighter, kinder, more people-centred touch — indeed, a more human touch.

An obvious ongoing concern will be funding for groups and individuals. There is a clear argument for the establishment of a new fund to replace the Northern Ireland memorial fund.

A solution is also needed to the problem of long-term funding, which is currently provided largely under EU measures, and which cannot be relied on indefinitely.

One recommendation from Mrs McDougall's report is the creation of a new forum for victims. The Ulster Unionist Party will support the SDLP amendment, on the basis that the implementation of the McDougall recommendations would include the creation of a forum for victims. However, any such forum should be an independent body. Work for victims must be co-ordinated with the work of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) to address specific problems associated with child victims of the Troubles.

The new fund should be created by the end of this year, and finance to underpin it should be available from the Executive. The fund should be victim centred and not simply a cross-community reconciliation mechanism. Now that the conflict is over, the victims of that conflict must be properly catered for. That must be done now, at the beginning of the new mandate so that victims and survivors can see that there is a place for them in the new scheme of things.

I shall cover some of the points that Members raised during the debate. My colleague Mr Elliott, in proposing the motion, reminded us of the great suffering of many victims. They feel quite forgotten, but they must not be forgotten. The Member for East Londonderry Mr Campbell said that we must never equate the perpetrators of atrocities with the victims of atrocities, and I strongly agree with that. Mrs Kelly paid tribute to the role of Bertha McDougall, but if nationalists and republicans had been a little less begrudging over her appointment as the Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors, it would be easier to accept the tributes that were made today.

It is clear that Mr Molloy — a Deputy Speaker — spoke on behalf of his party because his senior political colleague the Deputy First Minister remained seated and did not demur during Mr Molloy's contribution. Mr Molloy appeared to rule out any implementation of Bertha McDougall's report and talked instead about state violence and collusion. He gave his support for amendment No 1, tabled by members of the Democratic Unionist Party. I fail to understand how the DUP can sustain that position, but I look to that party for an early decision when the Question on the amendment is put.

Dr Farry broadly supported the McDougall recommendations and referred to dealing with the past. Mr Spratt was right to highlight the financial assistance that is required through EU funding. Jennifer McCann returned to the Sinn-Féin-speak of there being no hierarchy of victims and blamed the British state and loyalist forces, but indicated that she would support the DUP amendment. All of that does not square.

I join Mr Storey in paying tribute to the security forces. I also endorse Declan O'Loan's comments that we need a full and early implementation of the Interim Commissioner's report. I thank the First Minister for his attendance and for his contribution. He indicated that victims' issues are a priority for the Administration and that they would not be forgotten. However, he also indicated that the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister would agree the work programme for the new Commissioner for Victims, when that appointment is made.

That throws up genuine concerns for the UUP, which will not be able to accept amendment No 1, as tabled by the DUP, because it would mean that control for all matters relating to victims, including the work of the new Commissioner for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles, would be vested in the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister and would result in direct day-to-day interference and guidance by people such as the Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, and the junior Minister Gerry Kelly. Many victims, particularly those from the unionist community, will find it bizarre that such individuals could ever be given charge of victims' issues.

**Mr Donaldson:** Will the Member give way?

**Mr Kennedy:** I am sorry, I do not have time. Members of the DUP should reflect on the fact that, by signing up to the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister's dealing with victims' issues, many people will find it unacceptable and intolerable that people such as Martin McGuinness and Gerry Kelly should have any responsibility for those issues. *[Interruption.]*

**Mr Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Kennedy:** I reject amendment No 1, and I ask the House to support the motion and the SDLP's amendment No 2.

**Mr Speaker:** I advise members that if amendment No 1 is made, I will still put the Question on amendment No 2.

Question put, That amendment No 1 be made.

The Assembly divided: *Ayes 56; Noes 27.*

AYES

Mr Adams, Ms Anderson, Mr Boylan, Mr Brady, Mr Bresland, Mr Brolly, Mr Buchanan, Mr Butler, Mr T Clarke, Mr Craig, Mr Doherty, Mr Donaldson, Dr Farry, Mr Ford, Mrs Foster, Ms Gildernew, Mr Hamilton, Mr Hilditch, Mr Irwin, Mr G Kelly, Ms Lo, Mr A Maskey, Mr P Maskey, Mr F McCann, Ms J McCann, Mr McCarthy, Mr McCausland, Mr I McCrea, Dr W McCrea, Mr McElduff, Mrs McGill, Mr M McGuinness, Mr McHugh, Mr McKay, Mr McLaughlin, Mr McQuillan, Mr Molloy, Mr Moutray, Mr Murphy, Mr Neeson, Ms Ní Chuilín, Mr O'Dowd, Mr Paisley Jnr, Rev Dr Ian Paisley, Ms S Ramsey, Mr G Robinson, Mrs I Robinson, Mr P Robinson, Mr Ross, Ms Ruane, Mr Shannon, Mr Spratt, Mr Storey, Mr Weir, Mr Wells, Mr B Wilson.

Tellers for the Ayes: Mr I McCrea and Mr Shannon

NOES

Mr Attwood, Mr Beggs, Mr D Bradley, Mr P J Bradley, Mr Burns, Rev Dr Robert Coulter, Mr Cree, Mr Dallat, Mr Durkan, Mr Elliott, Mr Gallagher, Mrs Hanna, Mrs D Kelly, Mr Kennedy, Mr A Maginness, Mr McCallister, Mr B McCrea, Dr McDonnell, Mr McFarland, Mr McGimpsey, Mr McGlone, Mr McNarry, Mr O'Loan, Ms Purvis, Ms Ritchie, Mr K Robinson, Mr Savage.

Tellers for the Noes: Mr Elliott and Mr McNarry

Question accordingly agreed to.

3.30 pm

**Some Members:** Shame. Shame.

**Mr Speaker:** Order.

**Some Members:** Absolute shame.

**Mr McNarry:** The shames have it.

Question, That amendment No 2 be made, put and agreed to.

Main Question, as amended, put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That this Assembly urges the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister to bring forward proposals, after the summer recess, for a new policy for victims and survivors, having due regard to the recommendations in the Interim Commissioner's report 'Support for Victims and Survivors: Addressing the Human Legacy'; and further urges the establishment of a Victims' and Survivors' Forum.

