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Allister blasts appointment of McBride as a Victims' Commissioner

28 January 2008

Statement by Traditional Unionist MEP, Jim Allister:-

“The spin over the appointment of 4 Commissioners, pretending it is a gain for victims, is designed to divert attention from the fact that OFMDFM was unable to agree. The danger is that the same dysfunctionism will afflict the working of the new Commission, with them able to act only on consensus. The lowest common denominator will inform decisions, rather than the real needs of victims. Also, money that ought to have gone directly to victims will be wasted on a bloated administration, which will be four times more expensive that it need have been. And all this in a supposed era of efficiency and value for money! The truth is that unable again to make any hard decision OFMDFM, which has been all over the place on this key issue, has gone for the soft option of “one for you, one for me, one for you, one for me.”

One of the Commissioners, Ms McBride, is someone in whom innocent victims of the IRA can have no confidence, given her antecedents and alignment with republicanism. Ms McBride has appeared in the Provo’s in-house magazine – An Phoblacht, alongside members of the Eolas group, an umbrella organization for self-styled “republican ex-prisoner and victims groups”. This group peddles the

obscenity that ex-prisoners and those who died while perpetrating terror, are to be treated equally with innocent victims of terrorism. Thus, Ms McBride is singularly unsuited to have anything to do with victim's issues. I am disappointed but not surprised that the First Minister has agreed to her appointment.

The key upcoming issue in the new legislation will be the definition of "victim". It is imperative that the unionist majority in the Assembly insists that the definition does not equate innocent victims with the perpetrators of terror. This will be a litmus test on whether the DUP is capable of getting it right and delivering for unionists."

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