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The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland



Northern Ireland's cross-community party

The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

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Long launches stinging attack on Paisley for his despicable comments on Victims' post

5.08.00pm UTC (GMT +0000) Wed 12th Dec 2007

Alliance Deputy Leader Naomi Long MLA has accused First Minister Ian Paisley of making comments which she believes could place the entire Victim's Commissioner appointment process in jeopardy. She raised the issue at the OFMDFM Committee today and branded the comments he made in First Minister's Questions on Monday about the previous appointment process 'a lawsuit waiting to happen.' She requested the Committee write to the First Minister asking for clarification on his comments.



Alliance Deputy Leader Naomi Long MLA

During an answer to Trevor Lunn, he restated that the reason for reopening the process was to encourage those who may not have come forward under direct rule to apply; however, he went on to say that "the beginning of the process did not stick to merit."

Naomi Long MLA said: "Ian Paisley's comments on Monday are potentially deeply damaging to the important process of appointing a Victim's Commissioner. By

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suggesting that the start of the process was anything other than merit-based, he has publicly undermined the credibility of those originally shortlisted, and who remain in the pool of appointable candidates. If the process was so flawed, then why was it not abandoned and restarted?

"His comments also raise serious questions about previous briefings and answers given by him and his Department which went to great lengths to assure people that the process prior to devolution was not flawed - a position he has now completely contradicted.

"This is an extremely serious matter. Candidates whom he previously stated were 'appointable' will rightly be very annoyed by his comments as they, and by extension the person finally appointed, could be undermined by yet another careless, bungling remark, by the First Minister.

"Not content with delaying the appointment in the first place, he has now potentially undermined the entire process. Ultimately, victims and survivors could be the ones to suffer as a result, as he may not only have undermined the current candidates, but also tarnished the appointment process beyond recovery."

ENDS

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