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for a

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Responding to the publication of the Eames-Bradley Report, Ulster Unionist Party leader Sir Reg Empey MLA has stated that the Report's failure to distinguish between victims and terrorists has entirely undermined its proposals.

Sir Reg said, "My first thoughts are with the families of those civilians and members of the security forces murdered during our Troubles. Stretching over decades they have carried the burden of grief and pain for loved ones whose

lives were brutally and violently taken from them. Nothing that is said or done today, or in the future, can remove that grief or pain.

"The Eames-Bradley proposal regarding the £12,000 'recognition payment' has brought immense hurt to these families, equating the lives of innocent civilians and security force members with those who inflicted terror and murder on our society. The outrage felt right across the community in Northern Ireland - and, indeed, further afield - bears testimony to the fact that this proposal is fundamentally immoral, offending the common-sense decency that helped our society endure and emerge from the darkest years of the Troubles. The failure of DUP-Sinn Fein to amend the legal definition of victim in their 2008 Commission for Victims and Survivors Bill has directly contributed to this shameful state of affairs.

"While the Ulster Unionist Party will give careful consideration to the full Eames-Bradley Report, it is impossible to envisage how a report that has provoked such justifiable outrage with its failure to distinguish between terrorists and victims will be able to offer a way forward for our society in addressing the past. I have already indicated to the Government that the recognition payment is entirely unacceptable. I know from my conversations with the Shadow Secretary of State that Her Majesty's Opposition shares our view.

"Northern Ireland does indeed have to come to terms with its past. For this to happen, however, there can be no equivalence drawn between terrorists and their victims".

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