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DURKAN PRESSES BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY ON FINUCANE MURDER

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SDLP Leader Mark Durkan MP MLA has pressed the new Foreign Secretary, David Miliband MP, on the need for justice in the murder of Pat Finucane. He was speaking after a House of Commons statement on Britain's expulsion of four Russian diplomats over Russia's refusal to extradite a suspect in the murder of Alexander Litvinenko in a London café. Mr Durkan stated:

“The strong stand of the British government over Russia's failure to help deliver justice for the murder of Alexander Litvinenko in a London café stands in stark contrast to its failure to see justice delivered for the murder of Pat Finucane. I took the opportunity to raise this inconsistency in the House of Commons following the Foreign Secretary's statement on the expulsion of four Russian diplomats.”

“A number of MPs from various parties had alluded to the widespread suspicion that the Russian state had something to hide, that state agents inspired or connived in this murder and that the means of murder had been supplied by the state or a servant of it. The parallels with the Finucane case are clear.”

Speaking on the need to pursue murderers he added:

“I agree with the Foreign Secretary's contention that there is a compelling need to pursue a murder to justice. I made this point to him in the Commons. While the Minister may have felt able to side step the inevitable comparison with Finucane and other cases on this occasion, the British authorities will not be able to evade the allegation of double standards which will follow.”

“The very reasons that the Foreign Secretary and many MPs gave for the extradition from Russia and trial of the main suspect in the Litvinenko case must equally apply to the need for prosecution and independent judicial Inquiry in respect of the murder of Pat Finucane.”

He concluded by pointing to evident double standards:

“The Commons was being told that in the Litvinenko case the commitment of the British government to uphold justice is at stake. Furthermore, we were told that the duty of the British government to vindicate the rights of its citizens is the issue. It is frustrating that people who can be so clear-sighted on the principles at stake in this case can be so blind to the requirements for justice and truth regarding the murder of citizens in Northern Ireland with the complicity of agents of the state.”

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