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Local & National

God will judge McGuinness over Enniskillen

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

An Enniskillen bomb survivor has declared that God will judge Martin McGuinness after the BBC said intelligence sources claimed the Deputy First Minister knew in advance about the Poppy Day blast that killed 11 people.

Age of Terror, broadcast tonight on BBC2, says Mr McGuinness was in charge of the IRA's Northern Command at the time of the massacre. The report by Peter Taylor says Northern Command co-ordinated the attack between three IRA units.

The programme says intelligence agencies believe Mr McGuinness was briefed on it three days before it was unleashed on Remembrance Sunday.

Detective Chief Superintendent Norman Baxter, who led the continuing investigation into the attack in recent years, told the programme that the attack was considered at a senior level within the IRA.

"The calculation was taken as to the number of casualties they could inflict on the civilian population against the number of casualties they could inflict on members of the security forces. And they decided that the risk was worth taking," he said.

"The civilians were collateral to the bomb but they were prepared to accept the number of casualties."

Mr McGuinness told the programme that he was not in Northern Command and knew nothing about the Enniskillen attack. The BBC said: "He declined to be interviewed." Mr McGuinness has not commented on the reports.

He has previously admitted being a member of the IRA, but claims he left the organisation in 1973.6

Some victims of the attack praised Mr McGuinness's transformation into a politician, but Jim Dixon, who was injured in the blast, said that to "see him in government is enough to turn the stomach".

"It is unbelievable and totally unacceptable that a man who is involved in the council of the IRA, which was carrying out heinous atrocities, it's unbelievable that he can sit in the government of our country.

The programme also says intelligence reports put Mr McGuinness in Fermanagh hours after the bombing, meeting IRA members to find out what went wrong.

The BBC said: "He didn't deny going to Fermanagh after the bomb but implied it would have been in his Sinn Fein capacity."

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