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## Local & National

# Cash refused for probe into rogue agents

### PSNI need £1.5m to examine killers

Tuesday, October 02, 2007

By Chris Thornton

The Government has refused to budge on funding for special investigations into police agent Mark Haddock and other informers suspected of serious crime.

A Policing Board appeal for the extra £1.5m a year has been rejected - leaving the PSNI to find money for the inquiries in savings from their central budget.

The investigations are already under way, but the relatives of victims fear that question marks over the cash could slow down and eventually choke off the hunt for evidence against killer agents.

PSNI Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde ordered the Historical Enquiries Team to take on the special cases earlier this year, after Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan's report on Haddock, the north Belfast loyalist identified as Informant One.

She found evidence that Haddock may have been involved in as many as ten murders while working as a police informer.

The HET was also asked to look into the activities of some police agents who were dropped by the PSNI in 2003 over suspicion of serious criminal activity.

A review of agents that was prompted in part by the Ombudsman's Haddock investigation found that 12% of police agents were suspected of involvement in serious crime.

PSNI detectives were ordered to review their activity and refer the case with the best evidential leads to the HET.

After Sir Hugh referred the cases to him, HET head Dave Cox told the Policing Board that he needed an extra £1.5m a year to give greater focus to the cases highlighted by the Ombudsman.

The Board asked the Government for the cash, but Security Minister Paul Goggins wrote to them in July saying that "no additional resources will be available for this purpose". He said "current financial pressures" were to blame for the decision.

Board members asked their chairman, Sir Desmond Rea, to meet Mr Goggins face to face to put the case for the funding.

The Policing Board could not confirm whether that meeting has taken place, but the NIO wrote to the Board recently to underline the Government's refusal to provide extra cash.

The NIO said it has ensured that the HET will receive the £5.8m a year in direct funding that was promised when it was set up by Sir Hugh.

That money was the subject of serious concern in August and September, when there were reports that the

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PSNI was having to pay for HET out of its central budget.

But at the same time that it guaranteed the core funding, the NIO said they will not budge on paying for the special investigations.

Paul McKenna, whose sister Sharon was shot by the UVF in 1993 and is believed to have been among Haddock's first victims, said he could see "no reason to hold back" the money.

"This needs to be put to bed as cleanly and clearly as possible, especially considering the time that has already passed," he said.

"It's a joke, and you have to ask why? I think it's another stalling tactic."

Raymond McCord, whose son Raymond Jnr was killed by Haddock's UVF gang in 2000, said: "What it comes down to is this - the Government promised money, but they've broken their promise to victims.

"They did the same thing with Mrs O'Loan - if they choke off the funding, they slow down the work.

"The investigations are going forward but they'll be restricted in what they can do.

"The plain and simple truth is that the British Government do not want the truth to come out in all these killings."

Mr McCord said he is also angered at "the silence of the First and Deputy First Ministers on this."

"They're more concerned with not offending each other," he said.

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