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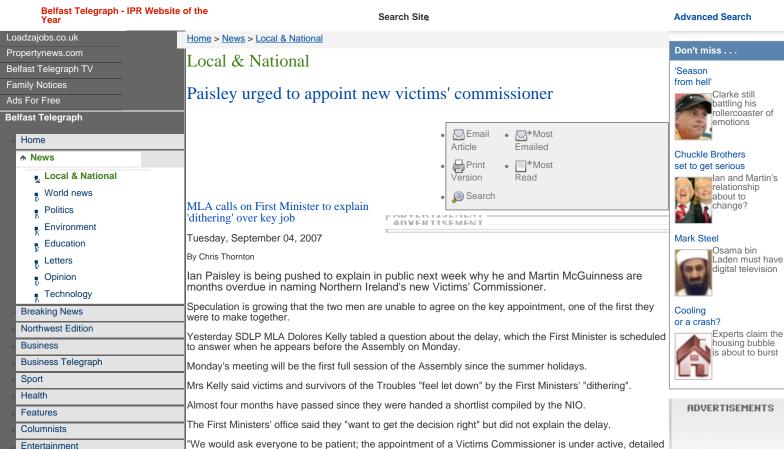
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Mr Paisley and Mr McGuinness were given the shortlist almost immediately after they took up office on May

In June, they told the Assembly they planned to announce the appointment before MLAs began their summer break on July 10.

and careful consideration and we hope to make an early decision on this important appointment," a

The £65,000-a-year post - previously held by Bertha McDougall - was advertised in January and 13 people

But that deadline passed without an announcement, and their office said that they aimed to make a

decision "as soon as practicable".

Reports say that shortlist includes former UTV presenter Mike Nesbitt and Marie Breen Smyth, who used to run the Institute of Conflict Studies in Belfast. In a statement, the First Ministers' office said they "had hoped to make an appointment before the recess

but this did not prove possible. "Victims and survivors needs are a high priority for us and we want to get the decision on an appointment

Political point-scoring on this issue is both unhelpful and entirely inappropriate, not least to those who have suffered so much during the Troubles.

Mrs Kelly said she is concerned that victims are not getting practical help with "housing, health and counselling" because of the absence of a Commissioner.

right. We will take the necessary time to do this.

If you talk to people in psychiatry, they say there's been an increase in psychiatric disorders related to the conflict since the ceasefires," she said.

There are still many people suffering from the pain of losing their loved ones in the Troubles and there are

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many survivors still searching for truth and justice.

"Nobody's championing their cause and it seems like there's no impetus to look at the real needs of the victims.

"I am outraged that the First and Deputy First Ministers have sat on this issue for so long. Do they not think people have waited long enough, have suffered long enough?

"It's time for Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness to stop posing for media photographs and start getting down to delivering on the issues that matter.

"I am calling on the First and Deputy First Ministers to give an explanation for their dithering on appointing a Victims' Commissioner. They must announce the appointment as soon as possible so we can start to effectively deal with the past."

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