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News

They said I didn't know enough about the troubles

Sunday, May 20, 2007

By Stephen Breen

CAMPAIGNING dad Raymond McCord last night vowed to launch a judicial review over his rejection for the post of Victims' Commissioner.

The north Belfast man - whose son was butchered by UVF informers in 1997 - has confirmed his barrister has initiated legal proceedings over the controversial decision.

Mr McCord, who was rejected for the post partly because he "didn't know enough" about the Troubles, has also called on Stormont's new First and Deputy First Ministers, Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness, to back his campaign.

The crusading father, who has vowed to highlight the NIO's controversial decision with senior US politicians, hit out at the way he has been treated.

Said Mr McCord: "I was so angry at the way I have been treated over this post that the only option left available to me was legal action.

"I have already been speaking to my legal people and we are now seeking a judicial review over this whole farce.

"I would hope that no appointment is made to this position until the outcome of the judicial review has been completed. All I want is to be treated fairly."

He added: "They said I didn't know enough about the Troubles, but my son was murdered and for the last nine years my family has been subjected to intimidation and death-threats.

"I am not saying I was the right person for the job, but surely their suggestion that I didn't know how to deal with the media is ludicrous.

"It is me who has kept my son's murder in the public domain for almost a decade. It's now up to the courts to decide this case."

Mr McCord, who raised his case with the DUP's Ian Paisley jnr and Nigel Dodds last week, urged new MLAs not to forget about people who lost their lives during the conflict.

He said: "The politicians have to remember that some of the language they used during the past got people killed. I don't think there is any harm in our new politicians apologising for the sectarian rhetoric they once used."

He also confirmed he is to visit Washington again later this year to update politicians on Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan's report into his son's killing.

A total of 46 people applied for the Victims' Commissioner job when it was advertised in January.

Thirteen people have been interviewed, but no appointment has been announced.

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