

Justice for the Forgotten

The Organisation of Victims & Relatives seeking justice for the
Dublin & Monaghan Bombings of 17th May 1974;
and the Dublin Bombings of 1st December 1972 and 20th January 1973



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1 October 1999:

RESPONSE TO REMARKS MADE BY AN TAOISEACH IN DÁIL ÉIREANN IN REPLY TO DÁIL QUESTIONS ON THE 29TH SEPTEMBER 1999.

1. Justice for the Forgotten wishes to take this opportunity to clarify certain matters arising from replies given by An Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern T.D. to questions asked of him in Dail Eireann touching the work of the Inter-Departmental Committee and the Committee of Justice for the Forgotten in seeking to establish a case for a public judicial tribunal of inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings.
2. It was always accepted that the work and deliberations of the Inter- Departmental Committee and the sub-committee of Justice for the Forgotten would be carried on, if not under a cloak of confidentiality, at least with discretion and with the avoidance of public comment on the joint deliberations, save where absolutely necessary.
3. Justice for the Forgotten is dismayed that it is obliged to correct publicly statements made by An Taoiseach, who must have been misinformed, concerning the present circumstances obtaining between Justice for the Forgotten and the Inter-Departmental Committee.
4. An Taoiseach told Dail Eireann that he did not think that the victims or their legal representatives disagreed with the view expressed by Commissioner Wilson that the issues pertinent to a public inquiry should be examined privately. On the contrary, Justice for the Forgotten and it's legal representatives have been adamant in opposition to such a suggestion. In the same statement, the Taoiseach indicated that the Inter- Departmental Committee had been working with the victims and their legal representatives to try to establish an inquiry. This is not accurate.
5. Our sub-committee were informed by the Inter-Departmental Committee that it was precluded by Government decision from embarking upon that very work as it was an emerging view in the Government that this work should be given over to the Judicial Personage who was recommended by John Wilson to conduct a private inquiry into the substantive issues of the bombings.
6. Again, Justice for the Forgotten were forthright in their opposition to this proposal.
7. In a supplemental reply in Dail Eireann on September 29th, the Taoiseach indicated that documents had been passed over to the Inter-Departmental group. This fact was never disclosed

to Justice for the Forgotten. In this reply, the Taoiseach stated that it was "not much good for amateurs to be looking at these things". We agree. Justice for the Forgotten recommended that the resources available to the Office of the Attorney General be employed to examine the material, and if appropriate in consultation with the legal representatives of Justice for the Forgotten.

8. It is the duty and function of governments to govern and ultimately the decision to establish a public Tribunal of Inquiry under the Tribunal of Inquiries Acts is a Government decision. The appointment of an eminent legal person with no powers to compel the attendance of witnesses or to require the production of documents is a very curious decision and smacks of the Government wishing to divest itself of political responsibility for grasping the thorny nettle that is the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings case.
9. We welcome very much the Taoiseach's suggestion that the work of examining the basis for a Public Enquiry could take place in conjunction with the legal representatives of the families. Justice for the Forgotten has pressed for this all along and is firmly of the view that this work should commence with the Inter-Departmental Committee having available to it the resources of the Attorney General's Office in carrying out the detailed analysis of the material and evidence currently available.
10. Finally, we are satisfied that there is sufficient evidence already in the public domain and suggested to exist in files and papers not yet released, to work out detailed and effective terms of reference for a Public Inquiry established on a statutory basis and if necessary with cross-border co- operation. A Private Inquiry reinforces the belief among the victims and their families that the Government is more concerned with concealing facts from the public gaze than in pursuing truth and the vindication of the very many lives taken and blighted twenty five years ago.

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