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Victims' families have mixed views on talks

(Suzanne McGonagle, [Irish News](#))

Families bereaved through violence last night (Friday) expressed mixed responses on the possibility that a fully functioning power-sharing executive could be in place next year.

Mark O'Connor, who believes his son Gareth was abducted and murdered by the IRA, last night said the proposed deal would not make any difference to his family.

The body of Mr O'Connor, who went missing in May 2003, was pulled out of Newry Canal two years later.

His family has insisted he was murdered by the IRA, despite its denials.

"My son was taken from us and murdered. This will make no difference to us now, it would have been better if it had been done 40 years ago," Mr O'Connor said.

"Unfortunately it means absolutely nothing to me. In my view it's not going to make any difference until the bodies of all the Disappeared have been returned to their families."

However, Paul McIlwaine, whose son David was stabbed to death by UVF members in Tandragee, Co Armagh in 2000, last night said he believed it was time the parties got together.

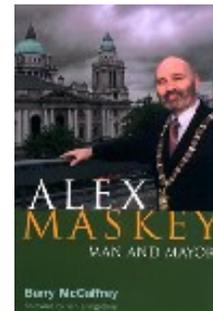
"Everyone should be willing to talk," he said.

"I feel it is about time that they got together and sorted something out.

"They are not going to solve anything until they have the executive up and running."

Meanwhile, DUP MPs Sammy Wilson and Jeffrey Donaldson were said to have clashed with a cross-community group from Relatives for Justice who staged a protest outside the talks.

The pressure group travelled to St Andrews to raise the issue



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by Barry McCaffrey

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of collusion.

Mr McIlwaine said they were warmly greeted by Sinn Féin and SDLP delegates.

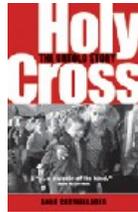
The DUP was last night unavailable for comment on the claims.

October 16, 2006

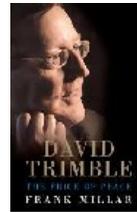
- This column was written before the St Andrews Agreement was announced.

This article appeared first in the October 14, 2006 edition of the [Irish News](#).

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