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Thursday, March 12, 2009

## Body of constable returned to his family

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GERRY MORIARTY, CONOR LALLY and NEIL CARNDUFF

THE BODY of Constable Stephen Carroll was returned to his family in Banbridge yesterday evening as two men aged 37 and 17 continued to be questioned by PSNI detectives in connection with his murder.

It is also understood progress is being made in the investigation into Saturday night's murders of British soldiers Mark Quinsey and Patrick Azimkar at Massereene British army base in Antrim town, killings that were claimed by the Real IRA.

While the Continuity IRA said it was responsible for killing Constable Carroll in Craigavon on Monday night, there were some reports last night of a possible link between the Antrim and Craigavon attacks.

However, PSNI chief constable Sir Hugh Orde said the two shootings were being treated as "separate incidents", and reports of a connection were "speculation".

The two men arrested in Craigavon on Tuesday remained in custody last night.

Sir Hugh and Garda Commissioner Fachtna Murphy are this morning scheduled to meet in Belfast for talks on the recent killings and the cross-Border response to the changed security situation.

The talks were originally planned for Dublin, but were changed to police headquarters at Knock in Belfast because of the pressures on the chief constable.

DUP First Minister Peter Robinson and Sinn Féin Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness continued to win plaudits yesterday for the manner in which they united with Sir Hugh to condemn the killings and to call for public support in apprehending the killers.

After twice delaying their trip, Mr Robinson and Mr McGuinness flew out to the US yesterday for their investment/political visit that culminates with a meeting with President Barack Obama on St Patrick's Day in Washington.

Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams is leading a party delegation in talks about the recent killings with Taoiseach Brian Cowen in Government Buildings today.

Some family members and friends of the two soldiers killed in Antrim travelled to the scene of the shooting at Massereene barracks yesterday.

And as Constable Carroll's widow Kate made final preparations for his funeral this week, thousands of people gathered at peace protests in different parts of Northern Ireland yesterday.

Demonstrators observed minutes of silence at rallies in Belfast, Derry, Newry, Lisburn and Downpatrick in memory of the dead, in sympathy with the injured and the bereaved, and to express their revulsion at the attacks.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions (Ictu) president Patricia McKeown said unions stood "united with our political leaders to say to those who would derail a process that we have fought so hard for, and sacrificed so long for, that there is no space in this society for you".

Ictu assistant general secretary Peter Bunting thanked those present, and told them their attendance made clear their "abhorrence at these murders . . ."

John Corey, chairman of the Ictu Northern Ireland Committee, said the demonstration showed the rest of the world "that the people of Northern Ireland absolutely and totally reject those who carried out those brutal crimes against humanity".

Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly were also present to lend their support.

Alliance party leader David Ford said the high turnout at such short notice illustrated the widespread "determination that we will not be peeled back".

Dawn Purvis, leader of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) which is linked to the UVF, said the demonstration showed how the condemnation stretched right across the community.

This article appears in the print edition of the Irish Times

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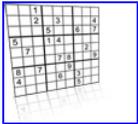
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