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MCDONNELL: SINN FEIN MUST STEP FORWARD TO HELP VICTIMS

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SDLP Deputy Leader and South Belfast MP Dr Alasdair McDonnell has challenged Sinn Fein to step up to the mark and deliver truth and justice for the victims of the Troubles.

Dr McDonnell said there was an onus on those who did the worst, knew the most and have said the least to take responsibility for their actions in the past.

He said: “The past week and indeed the past two months has seen a lot of controversy and contention surrounding the publication of the Eames/Bradley report and the whole issue of victims.

“There has been a mixture of protest and prevarication, diatribe and denial and hypocrisy and hysteria.

“However, none of this is moving the victims’ agenda forward one iota.

“The SDLP has always maintained that victims need truth, recognition and remembrance as a pathway to closure and this position remains unaltered.

“Therefore once again we call on those who did the worst, knew the most and have said the least to step up the mark and help deliver for victims.

“And to be precise I am talking about Sinn Fein and the provisional movement. The IRA and those who supported their campaign over the past 30 years should not be allowed to sit back and lecture others without coming forward and telling what they know about the past.

“When a Sinn Fein minister can go to the IRA and publicly make the dubious proclamation they were not involved in the murder of Paul Quinn then surely it is not beyond them to go back and ask them to co-operate with the truth delivery process.

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“The provisional movement should acknowledge the sectarian nature of their campaign and the fact that the vast majority of the nationalist community had no time for that campaign and share deeply in the hurt the Provos inflicted on the unionist community.

“And they must not act alone. The scale and depth of state collusion in the murder of innocent people is still not fully known. The British Government can make whatever pronouncements they like on recognition payments but they too must face up to their responsibilities and order their forces and agencies to step forward.

“So far, elements in the RUC, the British Army, the wider security services and the leadership of the IRA, UDA, UVF and other terror groups have failed to do so in any credible fashion.

“Until that happens and these people are held to account for the actions, the shadow of past will stretch over our future smothering the potential for peace and reconciliation.”

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