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Ian Paisley criticised over 'Catholic IRA' comment

(UTV news report)

A DUP MP has faced criticism from parliamentary counterparts after linking the IRA with Catholicism.

Ian Paisley's reference to the sectarian murder campaign by the "Catholic IRA" drew critical responses from fellow members of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee.

Mr Paisley was questioning Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis on legacy issues and was asking him if he was going to push the Irish Government to do more to secure justice for IRA killings in border areas during the Troubles.

"Today is Holocaust Memorial Day where we remember victims of Holocaust and also other genocide around the world and in Northern Ireland of course we remember the border campaign and the genocide of sectarian murder where the IRA, the Catholic IRA, murdered Protestants at the border," said North Antrim MP Mr Paisley.

"And we've been pushing for over a year now for the Irish government to move beyond lip service that they would address issues to do with the unsolved 500 murders on the border that were of British people in their jurisdiction and then dumped on our border."

In response, Mr Lewis said he supported DUP First Minister Arlene Foster's request for Taoiseach Micheal Martin to fully investigate allegations that former Garda members colluded with the IRA during the Troubles.

At the conclusion of Mr Paisley's questioning of Mr Lewis, Alliance MP Stephen Farry criticised the remarks.

"I want to very much disassociate myself from the comments about the Catholic IRA," he said.

The North Down MP added: "IRA terrorism and indeed sectarian murders were strongly condemned by the Catholic Church, it's nothing to do with Catholicism."

Committee chairman and Conservative MP Simon Hoare also express concern at the comment.

"I appreciate how incredibly sensitive this is and I appreciate the huge problems and fear for their lives that the Paisley family have gone through but as a practising Roman Catholic myself I would also just like to note that I didn't think the way that that question was phrased was conducive to trying to move things forward."

Mr Paisley attempted to interject to respond to the remarks of Mr Hoare and Mr Farry but the chairman would not let him and instead asked the Alliance MP to move to his substantive questions to Mr Lewis.

The Secretary of State was facing committee questions on the Government's yet to be published revised plans for dealing with the toxic legacy of the Troubles.

In March last year, Mr Lewis announced that only killings with "compelling" new evidence and a realistic prospect of prosecution will receive a full police re-investigation.

He said most unsolved cases will be closed after a review exercise and a new law would prevent those investigations into the decades of violence from being reopened.

The written statement to Parliament marked a dramatic step away from mechanisms agreed by the UK and Irish Governments and main Stormont parties in the 2014 Stormont House Agreement.

The Stormont House proposals included a new independent investigation unit to re-examine all unsolved



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In a further statement in January, in response to an examination of legacy issues by the NI Affairs Committee, the Government said it wanted to place "information recovery at the heart of any new legacy system".

It said the current "divisive cycle of reinvestigations and civil action" as a primary route to securing truth recovery was failing to obtain answers for a majority of victims.

Mr Hoare pressed Mr Lewis on when definitive proposals would be made public.

Mr Lewis said he remained confident that draft legislation, along with a plan for implementing new measures, would be published before Westminster's summer recess.

He insisted the ongoing consultation with victims would be central to the process of developing the new plans.

Mr Lewis was also challenged by SDLP MP Claire Hanna on the stand-off between the Government and the Stormont Executive on who pays for a new pension scheme for Troubles victims.

The Secretary of State reiterated his criticism of the Executive stance but he stressed that there was no doubt that the victims would ultimately get the payments.

"They will get their money, they are legally entitled to it," he said.

Mr Lewis said the executive had got a £900 million uplift in funding in November's spending review.

"The Executive Office estimate that this in year one is about £28 million (the cost of the pension scheme) yet the Department of Finance still haven't allocated a single penny in the budget for what is a priority of the Executive," he said.

"I don't think that's tenable. I don't think it is acceptable."

The attempt by the Roman Catholic MPs, Simon Hoare and Alliance MP Stephen Farry to 'shield' 'Mother Church' from criticism regarding her links to terrorism was less than vain!

History has condemned Romanism for her centuries of anti-Protestant terrorism and multiple murders of Bible believers. Romanism has rightly been linked to that system of anti-Christianity referred to in Revelation 17:6 which the Lord says is "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

Any attempts by those of her flock to exonerate her from such wickedness is more than countered by the record of history, ancient and modern!

Here are but two reports from recent times which indicate clearly that Romanism was and is involved in terrorism, despite her protestations of innocence.

- **Provo priest: My only regret? That I didn't do more for IRA**
- **Northern Ireland: Secret deal let 'Provo priest' escape justice after Claudy bombing**
- **See also the Wikipedia report on this evil man.**