

Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

Trustees Report

1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Charity Contact Details:

Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

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Charity No: 100878

Charity Aims and Objectives

The Ballymurphy Massacre Committee (TBMC) represents and supports victims of state conflict in Ballymurphy and its surroundings by campaigning for redress for victims of human rights abuse. TBMC does this by promoting and dissemination information about the circumstances of the deaths of eleven people in the Ballymurphy Massacre in August 1971 and other such atrocities. By educating the general public in the study, research and enquires into such deaths. TBMC raises awareness of human rights issues and in particular the Ballymurphy Massacre by facilitating debate, organising lectures, seminars, exhibitions, lobbying politicians and information session. Providing educational talks on human rights to conferences, schools, universities, human rights organisations, NGOs and to public and private institutions, including government departments. TBMC is committed to supporting individuals deal with past traumas through programmes of social support so that they can examine their past in order to move forward and reconcile their inner conflict; this is an essential part of the healing process. Where appropriate TBMC will, undertake commission and promote research in all aspects of human rights issues, bringing all useful findings to the widest possible audience. TBMC is committed to International Advocacy of Human rights and in particular to the events of the Ballymurphy Massacre, this is achieved by campaigning, advocacy, lobbying of International Governments to ensure the implementation of human rights legislation domestically. For all those who suffer as a result of the conflict in Northern Ireland dealing with the past is a major issue, resolution can only be achieved by addressing and resolving human rights issues and past trauma, TBMC seeks to procure truth and justice for the victims of these events by assisting

individual's healing and exhausting all legal/professional avenues that result in positive outcomes for individuals.

Charity Purpose

The objects of the Company shall be exclusively charitable and be for The promotion and dissemination of knowledge, information and understanding of the circumstances in which, between the 9th and 11th of August 1971, eleven people in Ballymurphy area were killed.

To advance the education of the public in the study, research and enquires into such deaths.

To procure justice for the victims of these deaths.

To raise awareness of human rights (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations conventions and declarations)

To cultivate a public sentiment in favour of human rights equality and diversity.

In making decisions and in all activities the trustees have adhered to the charity commission's guidance on public benefit. The trustees are confident that the Ballymurphy Massacre Committee's aims and objectives are in accordance with the regulations on public benefit.

Charity Trustees

Briege Voyle - Chairperson

Alice Harper

Rita Bonner

Carmel Quinn

Income and Expenditure Accounts Prepared by:

Outsource Finance

Upper Springfield Development Trust

668 Springfield Road

Belfast

BT12 7FP

Bank

Danske Bank
Kennedy Centre
564-568 Falls Rd,
Belfast BT11 9AE

Financial Review

The organisations income and expenditure accounts are set out in detail in the prepared accounts by Outsource Finance.

In the year ending the 31st March 2024 the income has increased by £4450 over 22/23's income. The expenditure compared to the previous financial year 22/23 decreased by £528, the decrease in expenditure is due to less travel for campaign purposes.

The charity is in a healthy financial position with cash in bank. The directors will review the funds that the charity requires to ensure that they are adequate to fulfil the charities continuing obligations.

Funding

Funding for the charity relies on fundraising activities, donations (£918.32) and memorabilia which consists of badges/charms and Christmas cards (£592.59). In this financial year donations received from the AOH (£8149.26) and from the LAOH (£3112.83). The sales of the Ballymurphy Poems booklet (£85.00)

Activities

Much of the campaign activities outlined during this period centre around opposition to the British Governments proposed Legacy Bill of Shame. Families have campaigned tirelessly to have their loved one's declared innocent which was achieved in May 2021, almost immediately the British Government proposed new laws that would end all inquests, civil cases and investigation into troubles related murders. All families deserve the truth which is enshrined in the human rights bill we will focus our efforts and campaign on stopping this bill and supporting other families and campaigns to get truth and justice.

The following is Briega Voyle's moving contribution to a multi-denominational service broadcast on RTE to mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement.

I am Briega Voyle, my mummy Joan Connolly was a mother of 8 and a wife to Denis. She along with 10 other Ballymurphy residents, including our Parish Priest, was unlawfully killed by the Parachute Regiment in August 1971 in what is now known as the Ballymurphy Massacre.

Like Jesus they were victims of state terror and in their deaths their names were blackened by lies.

For 50 years we tirelessly campaigned to establish the truth about what happened to our loved ones and fought a difficult battle against the establishment.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement we are thankful that it gave us families the space to openly investigate the Massacre which before then had remained hidden. It also brought about the mechanisms that allowed us seek out truth and to hold those to account for what they did.

It has not been an easy road but what sustained us on our journey was the knowledge that the truth can never be hidden.

In May 2021 the truth was exposed before the whole world. Our loved ones were declared entirely innocent of any wrongdoing.

The inquest verdict won't bring our loved ones back or make up for everything that we have had taken from us. But, it has cleared their names and restored their good reputation. The verdict has helped us to overcome another hurdle in our quest for truth.

We firmly believe the innocent victims of the Ballymurphy Massacre are martyrs, they bear witness to God who is love and truth
Their lives were brutally taken from them.

They are witnesses to us of everything that is good, loving, kind and generous.

Father Hugh Mullan,
Frank Quinn
Noel Phillips
Joan Connolly
Daniel Teggart

Joseph Murphy
Eddie Doherty
John Lavery
Joseph Corr
Pat McCarthy
and
John McKerr

These are God's children, the very best of human beings.

They embody the qualities that God calls us to have, created in his own image. Without exception they demonstrated ultimate love by laying down their lives for their friends, for their community. Each of them left a place of safety to go to the aid of others. Let us be inspired by their example;

To love,
To be kind,
To be generous and
To treat others as we would like to be treated.

Today we are reminded to "love one another, as I have loved you." This was something I grew up with; my mother, who was a devote catholic, instilled this belief in our family from a young age.

This has stayed with me throughout our campaign for truth and justice. It's easy preaching to the converted but what is more difficult is reaching out to those who hold different beliefs, views and opinions and realising we have more that unites us than divides us. It costs nothing to extend the hand of friendship.

An injustice for one is an injustice for all.

I want to take this opportunity to remember our loved ones, everyone in our community and beyond who has died in violent circumstances and those who mourn their loss. Our pain is the same no matter who we are.

Let us pray that God's love will bring them peace, truth and justice.
Amen



END THE BILL OF SHAME NOW!

John Teggart spoke at vigil against the British Government's legacy Bill of Shame outside the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast. He was calling again on the Irish Government to take an interstate case against the British Governments proposals.

The vigil was organised by the Pat Finucane Centre who had on display shoes from 'In Their Footsteps' exhibition.

Each pair of shoes represents a person who was killed or injured during the conflict.



Statement from the Ballymurphy Massacre Families Saturday 6th May 2023.

Today is a day to remember victims of state violence.

As King Charles III and his wife are crowned King and Queen of the British empire, we the Ballymurphy Massacre families will not be watching the spectacle.

Instead we will be remembering our loved ones who were brutally murdered by the British Parachute Regiment, the same regiment that Charles is the Colonel-in-Chief of.

The para's have been directly involved in over forty murders in the recent conflict in Ireland not to mention mass brutality, torture and waterboarding.

When he became king he became the Commander-in-Chief of all British Armed Forces who were responsible for almost 400 murders in our recent past.

We listened this week to speech's by Charles on reconciliation and how he is amazed at the good work of people on the ground, a lot of this work is done by victims groups like ourselves.

Yet Charles hasn't even tried to reconcile with victims of the regiment that he commands. If the monarchy is interested in reconciliation why did they choose 11th May 2021, the day the Ballymurphy Massacre victims were declared entirely innocent, to put their Royal stamp of approval on the Tory Government's Legacy Bill of Shame.

This bill will put an end to all inquests, investigations, civil cases and prosecutions. How can you call this an act of reconciliation?

The Ballymurphy Massacre Families will wait to hear what King Charles III has to say to victims of state violence when he lands on Irish soil.

Sorry would be a good start to reconciliation and right past wrongs.



Ballymurphy Massacre Inquest Verdict Video of Reflection

This day two years ago Lady Chief Justice Dame Siobhan Keegan published her verdict in the Ballymurphy Massacre inquests in which she declared all victims "Entirely Innocent."

In this film the Ballymurphy Massacre families reflect on the roller coaster of emotions they went through as they listened to the verdict and their elation afterwards as the Ballymurphy community greeted them.



Full Open letter from the Ballymurphy Massacre families calling on ICIR Chief Declan Morgan to resign.

24th May 2023

Dear Chief Commissioner-designate,

Thank you for your letter of 23rd May 2023 requesting an opportunity to meet with the Ballymurphy Massacre Families.

We would like to state from the outset that we are strongly opposed to the Conservative Party's Legacy Bill or "Bill of Shame".

The Ballymurphy Massacre families and other victims have campaigned vigorously in opposition to this Bill.

We maximised the support of all victim's groups and all political parties in Ireland, North and South.

With the exception of the Conservative Party all other political parties in both houses at Westminster have met with cross community victim's representatives and pledged their support in opposition of this Bill.

Opposition to this bill also comes from all NGO'S, Amnesty international, US administration and the European Union and many more human rights organisations.

Those who suffered the most, victims and survivors of the conflict, should be at the centre of any legislation dealing with the past. This bill runs roughshod over them and offers no real way forward.

In your letter you speak of a "new approach, where the past and current processes aren't working." We disagree totally with your assertion, our inquest which you facilitated is proof that the existing processes do work and will work for those families still awaiting inquests. You meeting victims' families in Belfast as the Lord Chief Justice and your five-year plan on inquests strengthened our confidence in the justice system. For the first time we believed justice can be served and the needs of victims can be addressed.

We are very surprised and deeply disappointed that you have taken this position given your sterling work in recommending mechanisms for dealing with legacy issues included in your 5-year plan.

This bill flies in the face of that plan and will deny others the opportunity our families were given.

It is also surprising to us that you agreed to take up your post before it has even been legislated for.

For many year's families had no faith in the courts or the legal system but in 2011 we took the legal route searching for truth and justice, although we were apprehensive we carried on and started to see some good decisions coming from the courts.

We feel badly let down that a figurehead like yourself, who we have always trusted, who has championed victims' rights through the courts, should take such a position of denying legal rights, whether its inquests, civil or criminal avenues for victims' families to pursue.

We as victims believed the Stormont House agreement and the mechanisms therein for dealing with our past is the way forward for most if not all victims.

We would rather remember you for your previous good work and that to be your legacy, than to be remembered as the head of a British Government department that denies truth and justice.

There is nothing right or honourable about denying truth and justice to victims and their families we therefore ask you to do the right thing and resign now.

John Teggart
Ballymurphy Massacre families

Supporting Topper's Family during their inquest.

Topper's inquest started at Banbridge Courthouse the coroner Mrs Louisa Fee heard evidence from eyewitnesses into the murder of Topper Thompson.

It takes courage to give evidence to an inquest, even when the event happened only a few days ago. But to do so 30 years later is a truly courageous.

The inquest will hear evidence from eyewitnesses about what they seen and heard on that tragic day.

Despite the passage of time, the eyewitnesses' memories of Toppers murder were still vivid. They described how they had tried to help Topper who was dying in the taxi, and how they had been powerless to prevent his death.

It was clear that they are still traumatised by what they witnessed and by having to recount their evidence.

Their courage and bravery should be commended, they showed great strength and determination in coming forward to tell their stories, even after all these years.

The eyewitnesses' evidence is crucial to the inquest, it helps to establish what happened on that day and helps to ensure that the truth about Toppers murder will finally be revealed.

Topper was murdered in a loyalist gun attack in Springfield Park on 27th April 1994, at 25-years-old. He was shot dead whilst being given a lift in a taxi,

Members of the Springfield Park community were subjected to regular attacks conducted by loyalist paramilitaries. They consider that the RUC and other state agencies, including the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), were aware of these attacks and the method by which these paramilitary groups entered Springfield Park was known to both the RUC and the NIO.

On the morning of 27 April 1994, residents notified the RUC, NIO and their Member of Parliament (MP) that the 'peace line' separating Springfield Park and Springmartin Road had been compromised by the creation of a hole and no action was taken to either repair it or provide security for the members of the community, though it was known that the area was subject to regular attacks by loyalist paramilitaries.

A Community Public Inquiry was held in September 1994 into the circumstances of Paul's death, involving international jurists and lawyers, including Judge Andrew Somers, Gareth Pierce, Judge Dan Coburn, Richard O'Meara, Dr Ray Murphy, Tom Fox, and Angela Ritchie. Documents were reviewed, statements were taken, evidence heard, submissions received, and a report produced in 1995.



Victims speak out against legacy bill of shame.

Susanne McKerr, granddaughter of John McKerr one of eleven victims in the Ballymurphy Massacre, is asking us to join her and other victims campaigners to send a clear message to the British Government that the bill must be withdrawn.

The Legacy Bill is a betrayal of victims and survivors of the Troubles. The bill will create an Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR), Sir Declan Morgan, who will be responsible for investigating Troubles-related deaths and injuries.

The bill will also grant immunity from prosecution to anyone who provides information to the ICRIR, regardless of whether they were involved in a crime.

This means that perpetrators of violence would be able to get away with murder, torture, and other serious crimes. This is a clear injustice to the victims and survivors of the Troubles, who have waited decades for truth and justice.

Recent amendments to the bill will stop any inquests, civil cases and prosecutions already at an advanced stage as well as those waiting to commence.

The bill has been widely condemned by victims' groups, human rights organizations, and legal experts. Amnesty International has called the bill "a whitewash" that "will let perpetrators of serious crimes off the hook." The Irish government has also expressed its "deep concern" about the bill, saying that it "risks undermining the rule of law and the right to justice."

The British government has defended the bill, saying that it is necessary to "move on" from the Troubles and to "build a shared future" in Northern Ireland. However, this argument is disingenuous. They simply want to sweep the past under the rug and allows perpetrators of violence to escape justice.

The British government must abandon this bill and instead focus on delivering truth and justice for the victims and survivors of the Troubles. This is the only way to build a truly reconciled and peaceful future in Northern Ireland.

In addition to the concerns raised above, the bill has also been criticized for its lack of transparency and accountability. The ICIR would be able to operate in secret, and its findings would not be subject to judicial review. This means that there would be no way to ensure that the ICIR is conducting its investigations fairly and impartially.

The British government must withdraw this bill immediately. It is a betrayal of victims and survivors, a threat to the rule of law, and a major step backward for human rights in Northern Ireland.



Time for Truth - British State Cover-up Protest Belfast June 2023

John Teggart spoke at a protest in opposition to the British Governments' legacy Bill of Shame.

Ballymurphy Massacre Families welcome the Attorney General's decision to open a fresh Inquest into the death of Kelly who was murdered in July 1974.



Murdered Turf Lodge teen Leo Norney 'entirely innocent': Inquest

Leo Norney (17) was shot dead by a member of the Black Watch regiment on 13 September 1975 soon after he left a black taxi. The soldier who shot him, L/Cpl John Ross MacKay, died in 2015. The inquest heard that MacKay had gone out that night "to waste someone".

Murdered Turf Lodge teen Leo Norney 'entirely innocent': Inquest

Anthony Neeson June 30, 2023 17:04



Springhill Westrock Massacre 51st Anniversary March

It was great to see so many out today in solidarity with the Springhill Westrock Massacre families as they remembered their loved ones on the 51st anniversary of the massacre.

Natasha Butler, granddaughter for Paddy Butler. said "We are not going away. We cannot and will not be silenced. We are never giving up until the truth has been told and our loved ones have been legally vindicated."

Harry Gargan spoke about their ongoing inquest and thanked all the civilian witnesses for their courage and in giving evidence despite the "bizarre and questionable" cross-examination of the MOD/PSNI. He hopes that the inquest will finish despite the implementation of the legacy bill of shame and pledged to stand by other families who will follow.

Mark Thompson of Relative for Justice said "The Bill of Shame is not going to be accepted" There is no support for it from political parties, human rights organisations or victims groups.

He pleaded with the Irish Government to "Stand up for families" saying that the "Good Friday agreement provided a changed landscape and a level playing field, it provided rights and entitlements."

It's the duty of the Irish Government not only to stand up for rights but to stand up for the Good Friday Agreement.

Ballymurphy Massacre Feile 2023 event dates for your diary

Here are some Féile events you might be interested in over the coming weeks.

Ballymurphy Massacre Campaign Exhibition

Location: St Marys University

Date: Thursday 3rd to Friday 11th August 2023

Time: all day

Admission: Free

Families have just completed erecting this amazing exhibition which documents the Ballymurphy Massacre Campaign through the eyes of the media using photographs, press statements, speeches and news reports.

Ballymurphy Massacre: Panel Discussion – “The Ballymurphy Model?” and Feile launch of “Ballymurphy Massacre - Voices of Innocence” book.

Location: St Marys University College

Date: Wednesday 9th August 2023

Time: 1pm

Admission: Free

Professor Phil Scraton, said the Ballymurphy Massacre inquest had “changed the inquest system forever” which had a resonance not only at home but all the way to Australian inquests where families of indigenous Australians have taken hope from the Ballymurphy families who have “exposed the lies of institutionalised power.

Yet through the British Government’s Legacy Bill of Shame they will end all inquests stating the current systems don’t work.

The Panel discussion chaired by Professor Leah Wing and panel members including Ballymurphy Families and Human rights lawyer Pdraig O’Muirigh will examine the Ballymurphy Inquests as a model for seeking truth.

At the beginning of the inquests in 2018 families were given the opportunity to tell the court about their loved ones in the form of pen portraits.

These moving pen portraits shine a light on the victims as loving family members, they were not just a number or statistic, they were real people who will be missed by their families, friends and wider Ballymurphy Community. The full unedited pen portraits as spoken by families are published in this book “Ballymurphy Massacre - Voices of Innocence” Extracts from the book will be read at the beginning of this event and the book will be available afterwards.

Ballymurphy Massacre 52nd Anniversary Mass

Location: Corpus Christi Church

Date: Saturday 12th August 2023

Time: 6pm

Admission:

The vigil mass will be offered on the 52nd Anniversary of the Ballymurphy Massacre. .

Ballymurphy Massacre March of Truth

Location: Starts Springfield Park

Date: Sunday 13th August 2023

Time: assembles assemble 12 leaving at 12. 30pm sharp.
Admission: N/A

You're invited to our main event of the year the Ballymurphy Massacre March of Truth. This will be the last formal Ballymurphy Massacre March of Truth, going forward families will continue to remember the anniversaries of our loved ones with a walk of truth following the same route and other events during Féile

We are calling on all our supporters to stand side by side with us in opposition to the British Government's Legacy Bill of Shame. It is very important that we send a strong message to the British Government that victims will never give up in their search for truth and justice. Guest speakers will reflect on their own campaigns and how this Bill of Shame will affect them. We are asking other campaigns, organisations and individuals to bring their banner and photos of their loved ones to take part in the March.



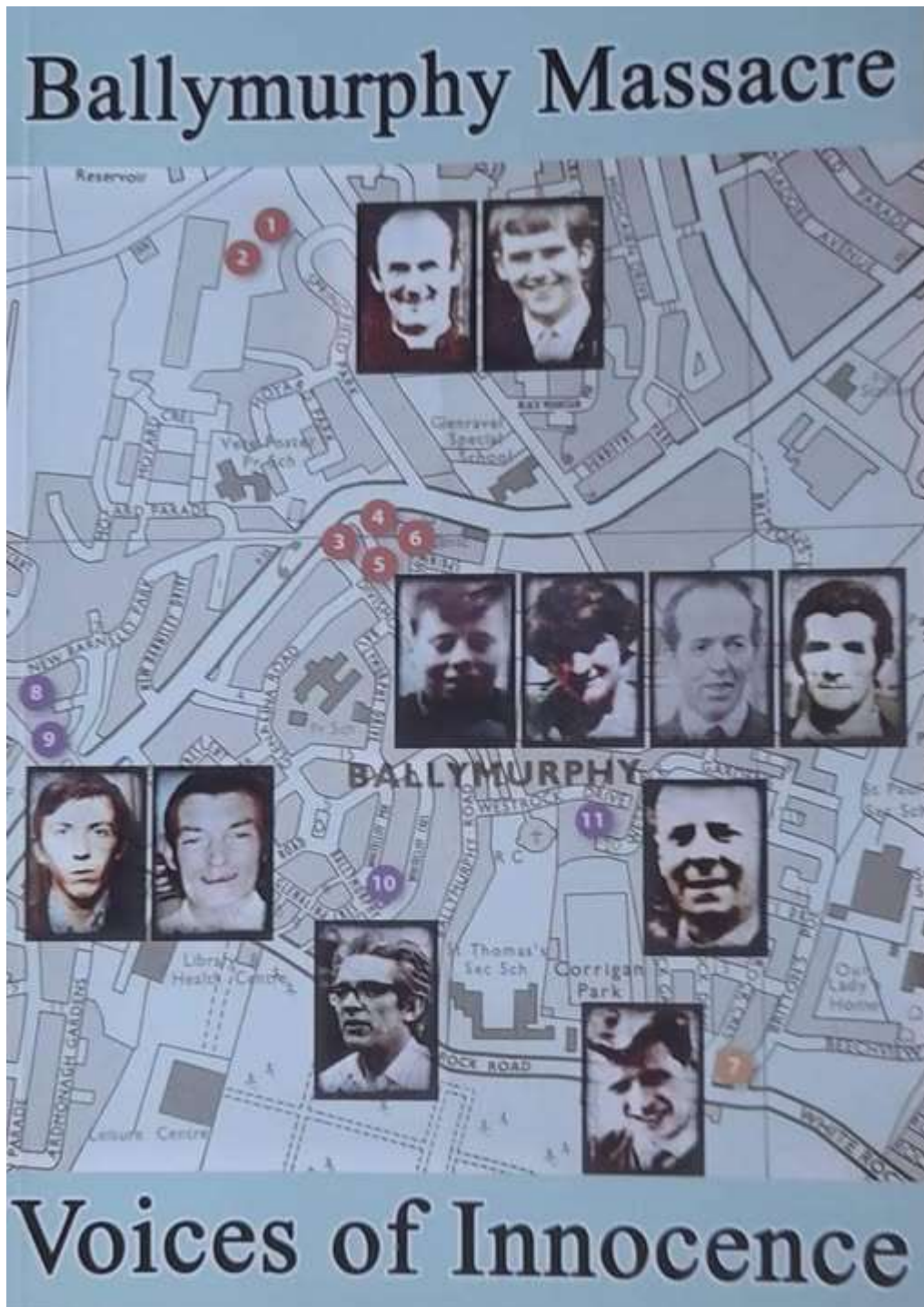
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Remembering the Ballymurphy Massacre Victims.

"Entirely Innocent" civilians who "posed no threat" to anyone, not my words, the words of Justice Siobhan Keegan in her verdict.

Today families remembered their loved ones on the 52nd anniversary of the massacre with a minutes silence during their feile event "The Ballymurphy Model" and book launch of "Ballymurphy Massacre - Voices of Innocence"

Geraldine McGrattan , Fr Mullan's niece, read her pen portrait about her uncle Hugh and Annette Peake, Frank Quinn's niece, read her cousins pen portrait about Frank.

The panel chaired by Dr Leah Wing examined the Ballymurphy Massacre inquests as a model for truth recovery.

Eleven minutes before Justice Keegan finished giving her verdict the British Government released the following Statement:

"It is clear that the current system for dealing with the legacy of the past is not working well for anybody, with criminal investigations increasingly unlikely to deliver successful criminal justice outcomes and failing to obtain answers for the majority of victims and families.

'The Government will introduce a legacy package that delivers better outcomes for victims, survivors and veterans, focuses on information recovery and reconciliation, and ends the cycle of investigations."

The Law Society of Northern Ireland on the other hand said they "consider that this Legacy inquest demonstrates the value of an independent judicial investigation as a means to providing victims and their families with access to Justice."

Padraig O'Muirigh, who represented families, said the new legislation will replace inquests with the Independent Commission for Reconciliation & Information (ICRIR) which in his view will not deliver the same for families as inquests.

The ICRIR will not have the same family/public participation that inquests afford, nor will it provide the same level of disclosure or engagement with experts that are available through the inquest system. Crucially the ICRIR will not allow families legal representatives to examine evidence or eye witnesses.

The clear message from families is this legacy bill of shame must be stopped.



Remembering Joseph Murphy Snr & Joseph Murphy Jnr on the 50th Anniversary of their deaths.

The small community of Ballymurphy has seen its fair share of loss and tragedy, there isn't a street that hasn't lost someone to the conflict.

Whitecliff Drive for example, home to the Joseph & Vera Murphy and Clann.

On the night of 10th August 1973, 22-year-old Joseph Murphy Jnr was visiting his brother in law in Musgrave Hospital when he was murdered by a Loyalist murder squad as he left. By the time the awful news reached his parents it was the early hours of the 11th August, on hearing the news of his son's murder Joseph Murphy Snr took a heart attack and died. The heartbroken Murphy family were left dealing with a double tragedy which doesn't bare thinking about.

Remembering also Mrs Vera Murphy who I had the privilege of knowing. She never got over the death of her husband and son, but she was a strong and resilient woman who had great faith and the love of her family to get her through it.

Thinking of Sheila, Marie, Vera and Gerard and the wider Murphy family. Joseph Murphy Jnr is picture with Fr Noel Fitzpatrick who was murdered by British soldiers the previous year July 1972 in the Springhill/Westrock Massacre. Vera gave this moving account to Jim Ó'Muadhaigh in 1994.

Young Joseph lived across the street, you could see his front door from my living room. His wife Mary always called in here before going over to make his supper.

So that Friday night she called in and said that her brother had been taken to Musgrave Park Hospital as he had hurt his leg and that her and young Joseph were going over to visit him. So Joseph then called and I told him not to bother making a dinner because I would make them something at my house. So they had some dinner and then got ready to leave. I walked them to the door, saying cheerio and that I hoped that Mary's brother would be alright. I remember it as clear as it was a lovely summer evening.

My husband Joe had just come out of hospital two weeks before as he was diagnosed as having angina. The doctor said that he would live for another 50 years provided he didn't get any severe shocks with all the trouble that had been going on. However, Joe was in great form that night and I remember him dancing and playing with my Kathleen's two children who had visited us. So after young Joseph and his wife left for the hospital I had a wee doze.

I remember waking and my other daughter Vera was there, she was sewing a pair of trousers. At about 10.30. The news came on and it said a man in his 30's had been shot dead in Kennedy Way. I jumped up in shock, but my daughter Vera told me not to worry, saying that Joseph was only 22. My husband Joe also agreed that it could not be our Joseph. But I was convinced that it was my son, especially when the later news came on and said the man was shot in the company of his wife and that they were both coming out of Musgrave Park Hospital. I couldn't rest and was in and out from the front door all night until my daughter Vera came in and said: "Mummy, you're going to upset daddy and he has angina" She tried to reassure me and again said "Our Joseph is only 22, the man killed is in his 30's".

During all this I was looking over to Joseph's house and there was no sign of either him or his wife. It was then I remember Joseph saying when he left the hospital he was going to Gerard Walsh's house in the Whiterock to go out for a drink. So, of course I wanted to go down to see if he was there or if he had called in. However, I didn't want to upset my husband Joe so I told him that I was going to get cigarette's. My husband said to me "Wait a minute, there's cigarette's here, I know what you're thinking, you thinking that was our Joseph". Of course I said that I didn't.

By this stage I couldn't wait anymore and went to Paddy Stott's house to ask him to bring me to Gerard Walsh's house. Just prior to that I went over to Joseph's house and rapped the door and threw stones at the window; the lights were out and there was no reply.

I saw Evelyn Clarke coming down the hill and told her what I thought. Then Lily Toner came out from next door and they both tried to reassure me.

Neither Paddy Stott nor myself knew where Gerard Walsh lived in the Whiterock so we asked around until we found his house and I went over and asked had Joe called. Gerard explained that Joseph was supposed to call in but hadn't arrived yet. At that I got on my knees and screamed that Joseph was dead and it was then Paddy Stott had to drag me to the car. On the way back home he Paddy told me not to worry and to calm down for Joe's sake.

When we arrived back Joe was standing at the door and his face was a wax colour. It was then I noticed the rosary beads in Joe's hands. I told him that Joseph wasn't there, but explained that he had probably gone to his mother in laws house with his wife. It was my turn to reassure him. It was now about midnight when a car appeared at the steps at the bottom of our entry. Joe said "There's your son now!" I thanked God and ran away, leaving everyone standing there. When I reached the steps I saw the car pulling in and noticed that Joseph and his wife were not in it but his two sisters in laws were there with another girl. They got out and I said "Where is my son, where is Joseph, where is your sister, where is Mary?". One of them said "Mr's Murphy, wait a wee minute" I

then shouted "Where's my child? He's dead, I know he is dead!" I screamed again and in the midst of my troubles all the lights came on in our street.

(Back at Mrs Murphy's front door, Joe was standing with his daughter Vera. Vera takes up the story).....

I was standing at the door with my daddy and he said "Is it Joseph?" I said that it was. He then heard my mummy scream, he got down on his knees and beat the path and he cried "My son, my son, I loved my son!" I was trying to hold him because of his heart condition but he collapsed on the path with my arms around him. I can't remember who came after that but he was put in an ambulance and taken to hospital. My mummy was in an awful state. She asked where daddy was and we told her he was out at the path, we couldn't even tell her he had been taken away in an ambulance. He died shortly after.



Ballymurphy Massacre Anniversary Mass.

Thanks to Fr Brian Watters for remembering the Ballymurphy Massacre victims in this evening's vigil mass.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families campaign is a long and ongoing struggle for justice. The families have faced many challenges in their campaign, including denial of justice, indifference from the authorities, and even threats and intimidation.

However, they have never given up hope, and their campaign has inspired people here and around the world.

The families' campaign can be seen as a test of their faith. They have had to believe that justice would eventually be done, even when it seemed like all hope was lost. They have had to trust that God would see them through, even when they were feeling lost and alone.

The story of the Ballymurphy Massacre families is similar to this evening's gospel, Matthew 14:22-33.

In this passage, Jesus' disciples are struggling in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. They are afraid and they are losing hope. But then Jesus appears to them, walking on the water. The disciples are amazed and they are filled with faith.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families are like the disciples in the storm. At times during their campaign, they were struggling. The MOD delayed, denied and obstructed their inquests at every opportunity.

But they never lost hope because they knew God was with them, even in the midst of the storm. And they found the strength to keep going.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families are an inspiration to us all. They show us that it is possible to keep fighting for justice, even when it seems like all hope is lost. They show us that it is possible to have faith, even when we are afraid. And they show us that it is possible to find peace, even in the midst of the storm.

The families' campaign is not over yet. They are still fighting for justice for their loved ones. But they are closer than ever to achieving their goal. And their story is a reminder that hope can never be extinguished.



Ballymurphy Massacre March for Truth 2023

The threat of rain didn't dampen the spirits or resolve of those who turned out in your hundreds to walk shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with the Ballymurphy Massacre Families on their last formal March for Truth.

Going forward they will continue with a walk for justice retracing the locations of their loved ones deaths and events during féile.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families campaign has been a long and ongoing struggle for justice. They have faced many challenges in their campaign, including denial of justice, indifference from the authorities, and even threats and intimidation.

However, they have never given up hope, and their campaign has inspired people here and around the world.

At times during their campaign, they were struggling. The MOD delayed, denied and obstructed their inquests at every opportunity.

But they never lost hope and they found the strength to keep going.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families are an inspiration to us all.

They show us that it is possible to keep fighting for justice, even when it seems like all hope is lost.

They show us that it is possible to have faith, even when we are afraid.

And they show us that it is possible to find peace, even in the midst of the storm.
The families' campaign is not over yet.

They are still fighting for justice for their loved ones. But they are closer than ever to achieving their goal.

And their story is a reminder that hope can never be extinguished, never give up!



Ballymurphy massacre Families statement

Today the British government Bill of shame was passed by an 83 majority vote, it now goes back to house of lords next week.

We had no doubt that this bill would be successful by the majority of the Tory party in government.

From an early stage, when the government were in their committee rooms and tried to bring through a statute of limitations, we campaigned against it. Let's remember some shameful unionist politicians were supporting the statute of limitations for ex-veteran's state forces with cases pending of unlawful activities. That idea was shelved when on legal advice that it would have to be an amnesty for all actors involved in the conflict of our recent past.

Now we are in a worse situation. We have a bill that in law will overturn all laws and legal avenues for victims and campaigners. This bill will take away any chance of unfinished or pending inquests, civil cases, prosecutions and an end of funding for the police Ombudsman's office.

All to save a handful of ex-veterans from going to jail where they belong. Our thoughts today are with all victims' families and survivors, affected and traumatised by today's disgraceful and shameful outcome.

On a positive note Labour Shadow Secretary of state Hillary Benn committed in the chamber to repeal today's decision if Labour Party get into government next Term.

We have asked in recent weeks to meet with the Irish Government urgently, that has not happened, we now call on them to listen to victims and immediately progress an Interstate case against the British government. And to take note of the Labour party immediate interventions against this bill today.

We now will see in coming days or weeks this bill rubber stamped by royal assent, by the commander in chief of the British Parachute Regiment & land forces Charles of Windsor. We will not rest until we defeat this bill of shame.

We will focus on what we can do, Here, in Dublin, America, Europe and we will support the pending legal challenges ahead, there is still work to be done, we are #nevergivingup.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families attended an impromptu silent protest at Newforge Conference and Sports Complex.

The Taoiseach Leo Varadkar was present to announce £850 million peace funding for Northern Ireland.

Families were there to highlight to the Taoiseach the need for the Irish Government to take and interstate case against the British Governments disastrous Legacy Bill of Shame.

The Bill of Shame finalises in the House of Lords tomorrow, Tuesday 12th September 2023 before it goes for royal assent.

Speaking at the protest John Teggart, son of Daniel Teggart said;

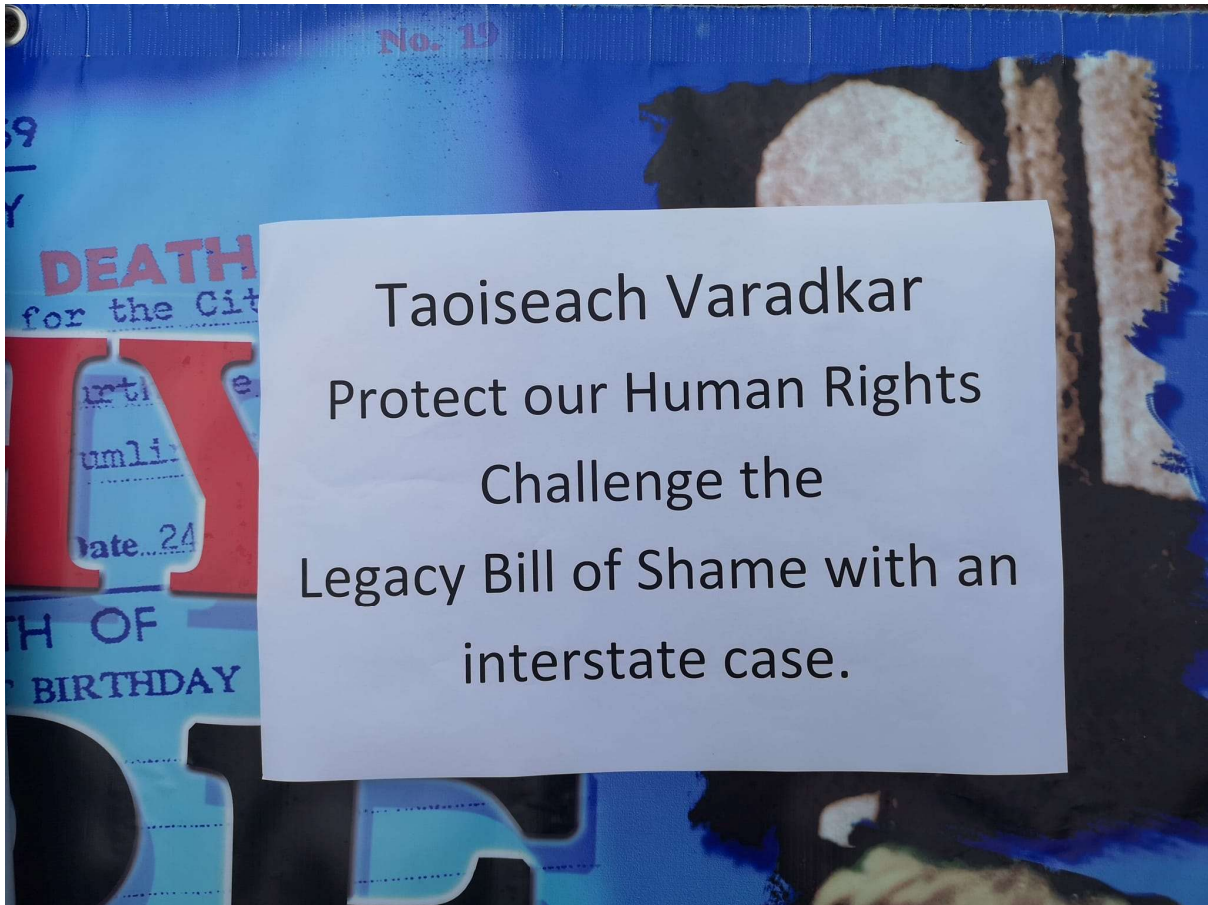
"It is disgraceful that families like ourselves are still having to stand in protest after 50 years. We feel we have not heard from the Irish Government a full and committed response to this disrespectful Tory bill of shame, we want to hear that they will take a case to the European courts of human rights on victims behalf. Don't leave us behind we need this interstate case to be taken immediately against the British Government.

We acknowledge today it is good news day, we welcome all the funding that has come forward from PeacePlus to the many groups and community organisations particularly those providing services to victims and survivors. We support their good work.

But what you have to remember is that families like ourselves are not at peace. We can't be at peace until this legacy bill of shame is binned and that can only be achieved by an interstate case taken by the Irish Government which is the fastest way to defeat it.

We say to the Irish Government don't be leaving victims behind,

Protect our human and civil rights by taking an interstate case immediately."



'A Young Life Stolen'.

Ballymurphy Massacre families were delighted to attend the launch of Gerry Armstrong's book 'a Young Life Stolen'.

Gerry's book is an autobiographical account of growing up in Ligoniel during the conflict – school, work, friends, and everything in between.

But primarily the book is the story of Gerry's 18-year-old brother Paul, who was abducted, tortured and murdered by the UVF on 8 November 1974.

Paul's murder was never properly investigated, nor has his killers been brought to justice. Gerry took every opportunity to speak about his brother Paul and has memorialised him in this book.



The Ballymurphy Massacre Families joined other victims families at a protest outside the office of Sir Declan Morgan the commissioner for the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR).

They are calling on Sir Declan to resign as the commissioner and expressed their opposition to the implementation of the legacy bill of Shame.

Protesters shout "Resign" as Sir Declan entered his office at Goodwood House Belfast.

The sister of 15 year old Danny Barrett addressed the Protesters. Danny was killed by a British soldier in Ardoyne on July 9, 1981. The schoolboy was hit by shots fired from an army observation post as he sat on the front garden wall of his home at Havana Court.

She too called on Sir Declan to resign and said the commission was not independent or human rights compliment and therefore did not have the support of victims.



Ballymurphy Massacre families welcome the resumption of the Springhill/Westrock Massacre Inquest.

The court will heard evidence from civilian witnesses into Incident 2 Surrounding the deaths of Patrick Butler, Fr Noel Fitzpatrick, and David McCafferty.

We send our solidarity as families go through the ordeal of listening to horrific evidence.



Legacy Bill Protest

Patricia Burns, daughter of Thomas Burns who was shot dead by the British army in July 1972 spoke at today's protest she said the British Government's legacy Bill was in breach of their international human rights obligations including the European Convention on human rights.

She said "The legacy act will pull the shutters down on the fundamental right of all families to an investigation, inquest and civil action. In law it will over ride the rights of all victims." She called on the Irish Government to take an interstate case against the legacy bill and told those gathered that families will never give up until the get truth and justice.

Remembering the Victims of the Ballymurphy and Springhill Westrock Massacres this Christmas.

Briege Voyle spoke at this years annual candle light vigil saying

"As we gather together this Christmas, our hearts are filled with the warmth of family, the joy of giving, and the hope for a brighter future. Yet, amidst the festivities and cheer, we must also pause to remember those who have been taken from us too soon, those who have suffered the devastating consequences of state violence.

Tonight, we honour the innocent lives lost in the Ballymurphy and the Springhill Westrock Massacre's, just two of the many atrocities during the Troubles. These massacres, perpetrated by

the British Army, serve as stark reminders of the human cost of conflict and the need for justice and accountability.

In Ballymurphy, eleven unarmed civilians were killed and dozens more injured. The victims, including our priest, were murdered by the British Army. Yet, the British government has consistently refused to acknowledge the overwhelming evidence of their soldiers' wrongdoing.

In Springhill Westrock, five more innocent lives were lost, three teenagers, a priest, and a father-of-six were again murdered by the British soldiers who had taken up positions in Corrys timber yard. Like in Ballymurphy the victims were on errands of mercy going to the aid of others.

We stand in solidarity with the Springhill Westrock Massacre families as they go through their inquest and commend the civilian witnesses who have courageously given evidence despite aggressive questioning by the Ministry of Defence who are attempting to criminalise the entire Springhill Westrock community.

We say this to the Springhill Westrock families, the truth will out and you will be victorious just as we were.

The Ballymurphy and Springhill Westrock Massacre's are not mere historical events; they are wounds that continue to fester in the hearts of the bereaved families and the wider community. The victims were not combatants; they were mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and children who had done nothing wrong. Yet, they were treated as if they were enemies, their lives snubbed out by British soldiers.

As we remember these innocent victims this Christmas, we must also recognise the importance of holding those responsible to account. The British government's continued attempts to protect their soldiers is an insult to the victims and their families. It is a betrayal of justice and a barrier to healing.

That is why we must oppose their legacy Bill of Shame, which seeks to grant immunity to soldiers who committed murder during the Troubles. This bill is a blatant attempt to whitewash history and to deny the victims the justice they deserve.

We must never forget the Ballymurphy and the Springhill Westrock Massacres. We must remember the innocent lives lost, the families shattered, and the community scarred. We must continue to demand justice for the victims and oppose any attempt to cover up war crimes.

As we celebrate Christmas this year, let us remember those who have been taken from us, and the victims of state oppression around the world. Let us recommit ourselves to the pursuit of peace, justice, and reconciliation. Let us work towards a world where no one is ever again subjected to the horrors of state violence that we have endured.

We will gather on this spot every year in remembrance, honour, and respect for our loved ones.



A Life Devoted to Truth & Justice: Remembering Davey McCafferty RIP.

At the weekend we heard the sad news of Davey McCafferty passing.

Davey was a father transformed into an unwavering advocate for truth and justice.

His passing marks the end of a life that was defined by a commitment to seeking answers for his son, David, who was one of the victims of the Springhill Westrock Massacre in 1972.

The loss of his son was a devastating blow for Davey his wife Norah and their family, but it also ignited a fire within them. Davey, supported by his family, refused to accept the official narrative, which placed the blame on the victims and labelled them gunmen. Instead, he embarked on a relentless quest to expose the truth of what happened that horrific day.

Despite facing numerous obstacles and setbacks, Davey never wavered in his pursuit. He believed that his son David, Fr Fitzpatrick, Paddy Butler, John Dougal and Margaret Gargan deserved the truth to be told and he was never going to give up until it was uncovered. Earlier this year he had his day in court and gave evidence to the Springhill Massacre Inquest.

Davey's determination saw him campaign for the Springhill Westrock Massacre victims and for those seeking truth and accountability for the victims of state violence. His pursuit of truth and justice inspired others to speak out too.

Davey's legacy extends far beyond his own personal grief. It is testament to the collective strength of families who refused to be silenced by the injustices perpetrated upon them. He embodied the courage of those who dare to challenge the power of the state, demanding that it be held accountable for its actions.

As we remember Davey, let us honour his unwavering spirit by continuing the fight for justice and accountability.

Let us oppose the state's efforts to hide their war crimes.

Let us remember those who have lost their lives due to state oppression.

Let us carry their voices forward, echoing their demands for truth and justice.

Davey's legacy will live on in the hearts of those he touched and in the pursuit of truth and justice for all who have suffered and will resonate for generations to come.

Our heartfelt condolences go to Davey's children and wider family circle. We know that they were by his side throughout his quest for truth and justice and will take up his mantle. The Truth will out.



It took a while to decide but finally the Irish government will take an interstate case against the British Government's legacy Bill of Shame. The first interstate case taken by the Irish government since the 70s.

NI secretary says case by Govt over NI Legacy Act 'unnecessary'

Updated / Thursday, 21 Dec 2023 06:56



From Derry to Gaza free Palestine

The 52nd Bloody Sunday anniversary March was in solidarity with the people of Palestine. A minutes silence was held in memory of the Bloody Sunday victims and all those killed in Palestine.

Huda Ammori the co-founder of Palestine Action was the guest speaker at the March. Huda has organised direct action protests at Elbit Systems, which produces and supplies Israel with specialist electrical equipment for military use including drone parts.

She said she will continue to take direct action to destroy Israeli weapons of war made in the UK and Ireland.

She said " They can try and beat us, they can arrest us, they can imprison us, they can take us to court, but we will never give up and we will never in and we will never surrender."



Ballymurphy Massacre families welcome “significant” settlement made by Martin and Edward Butler against the MOD.

Edward and Martin Butler were shot and injured when members of the Parachute Regiment opened fire on civilians in the Ballymurphy area of west Belfast in August 1971

Ten people were killed over three days after the introduction of internment.

The dead included Joan Connolly, a mother of eight, and Father Hugh Mullan, a priest shot as he tried to give the last rites to a dying man.

Both the Butler brothers gave evidence to the Ballymurphy Inquest.

In 2021 a coroner found that all of the victims were “entirely innocent” and that British soldiers were responsible for the deaths of nine of those killed.

She also found that the use of lethal force by troops was not justified.

Edward was just 11-years-old, while his younger brother Martin was aged 9 when they were shot and wounded in an area known as ‘The Manse’ field, which was opposite the Henry Teggart British Army barracks.

Four other people were killed in the area during the massacre.

The brothers had taken action against the Ministry of Defence and PSNI chief constable.

Pádraig Ó Muirigh, of Ó Muirigh Solicitors, confirmed that a settlement has been reached in the case.

“The confidential nature of the settlement prevents me disclosing the settlement figure,” he said.

“I can confirm, though, that the figure is significant and that our clients are satisfied with the outcome of this litigation.”

The events of Augusts 1971 would not be the last time the Butler family was impacted by the Troubles.

Less than a year later, their father Patrick Butler was one of five Catholics, including a priest and three teenagers, shot dead by British soldiers in what became known as the Springhill/Whirerock Massacre in July 1972.

The inquest into those killings is currently ongoing.

Under the British government’s controversial Legacy Act, all inquests that have not reached their findings stage by May 1 will be closed down.

Mr Ó Muirigh said “robust legal proceedings have provided much information about what happened to those families who lost loved ones and those who were left with serious injuries at the hands of the British army”.

“This draconian legislation is a clear breach of the European Convention of Human Rights and other international human rights standards and should be repealed immediately,” he added.

Brothers shot during Ballymurphy Massacre to receive ‘significant’ settlement





Mother and Catholic priest among Ballymurphy dead

Expand



Martin (left) and Edward Butler

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The Springhill/Westrock Massacre Inquest resumes to complete hearing evidence before the legacy act deadline of May 1st and the Military denial continues.

Military witnesses deny any involvement or knowledge of Springhill Massacre killings.

After thirty-seven days of the Springhill inquest families still do not know the identities of the soldiers who killed their loved ones. The inquest has now heard evidence from eleven former British soldiers of the regiment that shot dead the five victims. All of the military witnesses so far have given their evidence anonymously by video link and screened from sightlink public view.

After two weeks of hearing former British soldiers giving evidence by video link, the Springhill inquest still does not know the identity of the seven soldiers who killed the five victims. The soldiers who were all members of 1 King Regiment, were known only as soldiers A to G. They claimed they had shot dead gunmen from Corry's Timberyard where they were based. The 11 military witnesses were also members of 1 King Regiment and most of them were in charge of soldiers during their time in Belfast. Despite this all have claimed that they were not involved in the deaths of the victims, three teenagers, a father of six and the parish priest or that they knew which soldiers under their command fired the fatal shots.

One former commander in 1 King Regiment told the inquest that it was more than likely that it was soldiers from C Company 1 King Regiment that were involved in the shooting dead of the five victims. He had taken command of C Company when the regiment was based in Hong Kong in 1974 and he had heard that soldiers from C Company 7th Platoon had shot civilians dead when they were based in Corry's Timberyard in July 1972. However, he said he did not have any knowledge or details of their involvement and did not know the identities of soldiers.

Most of the evidence given by the military witnesses focused mostly on the command structures and tactics of the British Army during their tour of duty in West Belfast. They also described shooting incidents and intense firing carried out by gunmen at Corry's Timberyard when they were based there. One former commander stated that they were based in a "hostile environment" where the local community did not want a British Army presence in their area. A former Intelligence Officer for 1 King Regiment, who was based in Springfield RUC Station at the time of the incident claimed he knew nothing about five people being killed by his regiment. Another former commander talked about the 'fog of war' and how this had clouded everyone's judgement and recollection of events that occurred in July 1972.

Counsel for the victim's families cross examined the witnesses at length to try and establish the identities of the soldiers who shot dead their loved ones. Despite the best efforts of the families' counsel the military witness' evidence painted a picture and a narrative that it was soldiers that were under constant attack from the IRA and that when they did open fire it was at gunmen who were trying to kill them.



The Ballymurphy Massacre families joined other victims families at the high court for Justice Colton's ruling on the British Government's legacy Bill.

Justice Colton ruled that the provisions for conditional amnesty for perpetrators of Troubles killings, is a breach of victims rights under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Mr Justice Adrian Colton said there is no evidence that granting of immunity would contribute to reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

It's a good day for victims, hopefully this ruling will be the beginning of the end of this legacy bill of Shame.



Families 'vindicated' after High Court rules Legacy Act 'breaches' human rights

Conor McParland February 28, 2024 11:55



Paul Topper Thompson Inquest

Toppers inquest was due to restart last week but the PSNI chief constable and secretary of state (SoS) launched a legal action over a decision by the coroner to provide a summary of security force intelligence about Toppers sectarian murder in 1994.

Topper was murdered after loyalists cut a hole in a fence in Springfield Park. Hours earlier neighbours reported the breach in the fence to the RUC and NIO. However, they failed to act.

The coroner Louisa Fee was due to give a summary of the intelligence material when the PSNI and SOS took legal action to stop her.

Concerns had already been raised about the PSNI's failure to disclose information which was described as an attempt to run down the clock. If legacy inquests are not at findings stage by May 1st they will be stopped under the legacy bill of Shame

Today Toppers brother Eugene was joined by friends and supports outside the high court in Belfast as the legal challenge began.

The case was timetabled for a full hearing next Friday.

Eugene is determined to get truth and justice for Topper and will continued to fight the PSNI and British Government until the truth is out.



PSNI and government lose court battle to prevent disclosure of sensitive information at inquest.

Another victory for Eugene Thompson in the fight for truth and justice for his brother Topper.

The British Government and PSNI have used every trick in the book to conceal their own collusive involvement in Topper's murder.

But thankfully judges are seeing through their delay and deny tactics. Hopefully the coroner can now proceed with the remaining evidence and finish the inquest.

PSNI and government lose court battle to prevent disclosure of sensitive information at inquest

UTV | TROUBLES | NORTHERN IRELAND | ⌚ Monday 25 March 2024 at 3:23pm

