

Tuesday 27th March 2018

PETITION SUBMITTED TO DOWNING STREET BY THE VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF THE LOUGHINISLAND ATROCITY 18TH JUNE 1994

We call upon the UK Government to honour its pledges and agreements reached between the Irish Government and the then five executive parties in December 2014 at Stormont House regarding addressing the legacy of the past.

We point out that the implementation of those agreements, involving two sovereign nations and signatories to the European Convention of Human Rights, are based upon and meet domestic and international human rights obligations under the law.

We want to register our disappointment at the failure thus far to implement the agreement and the arbitrary insertion of a national security veto by the UK post the agreement, which hasn't helped. We equally note the Irish Governments opposition to the exercising of that veto in draft legislation. The draft National Security Veto should be removed.

As families seeking accountability we also note the failure to fund the plans by the Lord Chief Justice and most specifically the recent judicial review judgement by Lord Justice Girvan (*In Re Brigid Hughes And In The Matter of the ongoing failure by the Executive Office, the Executive Committee, the Minister for Justice and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to provide adequate funding for Legacy Inquests* 8th March 2018) that found this to be illegal.

We also note that this matter requires remedy by the UK Government. The devolved institution does not sign or ratify the European Convention on Human Rights – UK Government based in London does. Sovereign compliance with the ECHR is not a matter for a devolved administration at Stormont, it is a compelling obligation on the UK Government based at Westminster.

We are further concerned that the office of the Police Ombudsman has been the subject of a persistent campaign and rear guard action by the very people subject to investigation of wrongdoing by that office. This has included litigation and funding cuts. As a result, Dr Maguire is now unable to publish completed reports to other families.

These issues arise as a direct consequence of our complaint and report that found collusion.

Finally we want to register our absolute opposition to any Statute of Limitation for UK State forces, intelligence agencies, and their agents concerning conflict killings.

Impunity must and will be challenged. Accountability is required for **all** victims and survivors. International human rights standards and obligations must be met. They are not matters to be cherry picked and politicked. In our own case State agents were involved and accountability is still outstanding.

Taken collectively these issues constitute a direct attack on the rule of law, due process and the administration of justice and represent a breach of binding legal commitments in accordance with the Good Friday Agreement, the Stormont House Agreement and further the European Convention on Human Rights. We are concerned as to the Justice Vacuum which is emerging in respect of **all** victims and survivors and call for the immediate erection of human rights compliant legal architecture to provide the opportunity for access to justice for **all**, through engagement with the Coroners Court, the Police Ombudsman, the Historical Investigations Unit and the Independent Commission for Information Recovery.

We respectfully request by urgent return, clarification as to the precise steps that the UK Government are going to take in respect to our concerns as expressed above.