

4 January 2016

Joint Statement from the O'Dowd and Reavey Families*
Issued through PFC

Today, 4 January 2016, is the 40th anniversary of the co-ordinated loyalist gun attacks on our family homes that left three members of each of our families dead and a number of others injured including Barney O'Dowd (father and brother of three of the deceased). On this day we remember Joe, Declan and Barry O'Dowd and John-Martin, Brian and Anthony Reavey.

Speaking today Eugene Reavey said: "This is yet another sad anniversary for both our families. The ten families of those killed the following day at Kingsmills also suffered terrible loss and our thoughts and prayers are with them.

We note with sorrow and frustration that the British Government has failed to set up an independent mechanism for investigating the past - the promised Historical Investigations Unit(HIU). Secretary of State, Theresa Villiers, is demanding the right to censor information from reports intended for families on so-far undefined grounds of 'national security'. Whose 'national security' we are bound to ask?"

"It was only through the efforts of the Pat Finucane Centre, Justice for the Forgotten and an Irish Supreme Court judge, Justice Henry Barron, that we discovered that guns used in the devastating attacks on our families had been used in a number of other fatal attacks in the months before and after January 4 1976."

"These included the murders of Denis Mullen, the attack on Donnelly's Bar (in which Patsy Donnelly, Michael Donnelly and Trevor Brecknell were killed) and the murders of Sean Farmer, Colm McCartney, Patsy Mc Neice, Peter and Jenny Mc Kearney and Fred Mc Laughlin."*

"The NIO, RUC, MI5 and the Prosecution Service had known this for years but had failed to inform our families. Nor were we told that these guns were used in a bomb and gun attack on the Rock Bar that was carried out by the Special Patrol Group of the RUC. Or that the RUC had failed to investigate its own officers for links to the murders of our relatives. For years we were deliberately kept in the dark.

"Was this for reasons of 'national security'? Were these damning ballistic links not mentioned at the trial of RUC officers for the Rock Bar attack for reasons of 'national security' and is that why some of those involved received suspended sentences?"

Barney O' Dowd, now in his 93rd year added: "Our families suffered unimaginable loss when members of the Glenanne gang attacked our homes that winters evening 40 years ago. All families have a right to know what happened and why."

"It beggars belief that the British Government is still hiding behind 'national security'. What are they afraid of? Is it because of the probable involvement of RUC agent Robin Jackson in the attack on our home? The HET report on the Miami Showband Massacre established beyond any reasonable doubt that Jackson was an agent linked to the RUC."

Seamus O'Dowd, who lost his father Joe (brother of Barney) added, "It is never right to cover up criminal wrongdoing and if agents were involved in murder then Teresa Villiers should finally do the right thing and face down those who want to keep information from families. Stop prevaricating. Set up the HIU without delay. Forty years is too long to wait".

End

This is the first ever joint statement from the two families.
See page 301 of Lethal Allies for confirmed ballistic links