

Dear Richard Haass

As someone who has lost a loved one as a result of conflict in the north of Ireland I would like you to give consideration to this submission on behalf of my family to the Haass Panel on dealing with the past.

My brother, Sean Doherty, was killed along with Denis McAuley in a bomb explosion on the Harp Bar in Belfast on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 1975. Those who carried out the attack entered the bar and fired indiscriminately at the customers with a sub machine gun and then threw a bomb into the bar which killed Sean and Denis. Denis McAuley died in hospital soon after the attack while Sean died as a result of his injuries on the 10<sup>th</sup> September that same year. The UDA claimed responsibility for the attack on the Harp Bar later that night. However, the HET in their review of the case said the RUC at the time believed it was the UVF who carried out the attack.

Our family believe there was not a proper investigation carried out by the RUC as to the circumstances that led to the killing of our brother by loyalists. We were never contacted by the RUC to inform us of their investigations into Sean's murder. One of the guns used in the attack had been stolen from the Forensic Science Laboratory in March 1973. It was subsequently used by loyalists in six incidents including the attack on the Harp Bar. The RUC never investigated the circumstances as to how that weapon came to be in the possession of loyalists. We also are not able to rule out collusion in the killing of my brother. The theft of a weapon out of the Forensic Science Laboratory and the fact that those who were involved in the attack on the Harp Bar could have been RUC or state agents has never been properly investigated.

Dealing with the past to date has been a failed and traumatic process for our family. We have never been afforded a proper effective investigation by the RUC into the death of our brother. The Historical Enquiries Team (HET), which comes under the responsibility of the PSNI, has also failed to carry out an independent investigation into our brother's killing. In fact my experience of the HET has been to further re-traumatise me. I received the HET report into Sean's killing on a park bench. I had no opportunity to meet face to face with the HET as they refused to visit me at my home in Belfast. The HET arranged to meet me outside Belfast City Hall on a park bench where they handed me their report into Sean's killing.

After nearly forty years my family still has no closure, we feel in limbo, that we cannot fully deal with the death of Sean and begin to look forward to a future. We hope that through the Haass Panel talks that you will come to the conclusion that we need a new mechanism to deal with the past that is totally independent from both the PSNI and the British state.

Yours Sincerely

Martin Doherty

