

Dear Dr Haass

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

Our brother, Michael Neill, was killed by the British Army on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1977. The British Army claimed that youths had stopped a bus on the Cliftonville Road in Belfast and set fire to it. The British Army said a patrol arrived on the scene and began firing shots as youths ran off. The RUC issued a statement at the time saying that when an army patrol arrived on the scene they challenged a gang of youths who ran off. They then challenged the youths again with soldiers firing shots. In the British soldiers statements to the inquest they said that they fired a shot that hit one person in the leg. The person got up and was then shot again but continued on when the soldiers fired a third shot. Michael had been shot three times by British soldiers that night and died in hospital several hours later.

We do not believe the RUC ever carried out a proper and effective investigation into why the British Army opened fire that night killing our brother. The RUC did not interview the soldiers involved in shooting Michael. The soldiers we believe would have been interviewed by the British Army's Royal Military Police (RMP). We were never contacted by the RUC to inform us of their investigations into Michael's death. Neither the RUC nor the RMP could ever have carried out an independent or effective investigation into Michael's death.

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. We engaged with the HET in good faith. However, it became clear when the family met with the HET that they were not carrying out an investigation into our brother's killing but merely reviewing the case. The HMIC inspection of the HET has vindicated the family's view that the HET is a flawed process to address state killings.

After nearly forty years our family still has no closure, we feel in limbo, that we cannot fully deal with the death of Michael 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

Maureen Griffin

Patricia Neill