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Parties welcome scrapping of Troubles payment

Thursday, 26 February 2009

All of Northern Ireland's main political parties have welcomed the decision to abandon the controversial £12,000 victim recognition payments proposed in the Eames-Bradley Report.

However, republicans have criticised the British Government's handling of the report.

DUP leader Peter Robinson said: "The Secretary of State was in no doubt people in Northern Ireland would never accept this morally offensive idea.

"The reality of devolved government has ensured that this proposal could not be imposed against our wishes."

Sinn Fein's Victims Issues spokesman Francie Brolly, said: "This process has to be about delivering a victim centred truth recovery process which is independent of the British State — this is a bigger issue than the £12,000 recognition payment."

Ulster Unionist MEP Jim Nicholson said of the decision: "It is a return to common sense and decency, ruling out a derisory and insensitive attempt by Eames-Bradley to draw a line under the past by equating the victims of terrorism with the terrorists themselves."

TUV leader Jim Allister referred to Shaun Woodward's decision as a u-turn by the British Government.

He said: "It would have been much better if the Secretary of State had announced the payment would only be made to innocent victims. This would have demonstrated a distinction between the butchered and the butcher."

SDLP victims spokesperson Dolores Kelly said: "This decision was inevitable and we raised concerns about this proposal from the start saying this recommendation needed revisited.

"Eames-Bradley is not the best vehicle for the issue of recognition to be discussed and decided."

A spokesperson for the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland said: "We welcome the decision by the Secretary of State to withdraw the offensive recommendation and we remain opposed to attempts to legitimise terrorism by any means."

Alliance leader David Ford also welcomed the decision saying: "There is a need to recognise the suffering of victims' families, but such payments were not the right way to do so and there was major opposition from a broad spectrum of groups in Northern Ireland."

One of the few voices of support for the controversial payments came from Victims' Commissioner, Patricia McBride.

She said: "The payment could have helped where there was significant need in many cases."

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What the politicians fail to recognise is the legal definition of a victim of the troubles.

A victim is anyone affected - that's the legal definition, meaning the Eames-Bradley report when setting a compensation amount had to subject itself to the law of the land. When they want to compensate victims, the LAW decides the perpetrators of the troubles get compensated too.

Let's not forget, this is a law which the politicians have come up with. In reality - our politicians haven't a clue, either they have drafted a ridiculous law, or they don't know about it and are ignorant of its existence - either way the politicians who are now complaining are making themselves look ridiculous and their remarks are insidious at best.

*Posted by Martin | 26.02.09, 13:52 GMT* [Complain about this comment](#)

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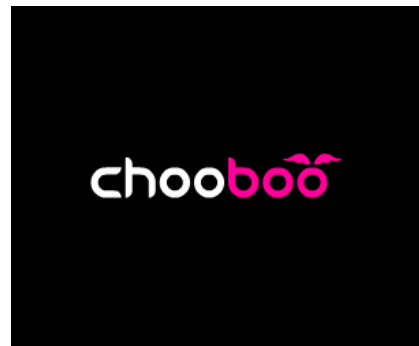
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