

27 April 2026

Dear Member of Parliament,

As the Northern Ireland Troubles Bill comes before you in Parliament for consideration of a carry-over motion, I am writing to highlight the responsibility that now rests with you.

Under the statutory duties set out in Article 6 of the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors is to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice affecting the interests of victims and survivors, advise the government on their needs and is required to ensure their voices are heard. It is in that context of exercising these duties that I write.

For victims and survivors, this is not a matter of policy alone. It is deeply and profoundly personal. Recent public responses to court decisions have, in some cases, been characterised by relief and even celebration. Yet for many families, those same moments bring renewed grief. They continue to live with the loss of a loved one in the absence of information about what happened to them.

The trauma of the Troubles is not confined to the past. It is still felt daily by those who were bereaved, injured, or who lived through its violence. I am concerned that the public and political debate has become dominated by a single narrative. While the experiences of those who served must be recognised, they are not the only voices that must be heard. The Troubles affected tens of thousands across these islands.

The Commission's most recent population survey in 2025 found that nearly one in five adults (19%) in Northern Ireland meets the legal definition of a victim or survivor. In Great Britain, the figure in 2024 was 8% and in 2023, it was 10% in the Republic of Ireland. Their needs and experiences must not be overshadowed, nor should we risk abdicating responsibility to meeting their needs as this motion comes before you today.

At the heart of this issue is whether victims and survivors will be given the opportunity to finally, for many, after decades, to access information about the death of their loved one - as is their right. This may be through the proposed Legacy Commission or the Independent Commission for Information Retrieval.

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For many families, this absence of information has continued to cause trauma that is now transmitting across generations. Access to information is fundamental to acknowledgement, dignity and the possibility of meaningful reconciliation.

I therefore urge you to ensure that the legislation:

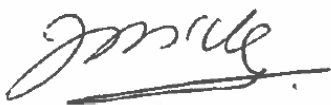
- Returns to the House in the new parliamentary session and is expedited so that those who have suffered the most, do not have to continue to wait
- The focus of Parliamentarians should be centred on the needs of victims and survivors
- The discussion and debate about the Bill's provisions complies with the rights and entitlement of victims and seeks to build trust and confidence amongst them

Every life lost and every family left behind carries equal value and deserves equal recognition. As you consider this legislation, I ask that all victims and survivors be placed at the centre of your decision-making.

Because beyond every clause and every amendment, there are people whose lives have been shaped by loss.

The choices made now will determine whether they feel heard, acknowledged, and respected or once again left behind, and whether we move closer to reconciliation or further from it.

Yours Sincerely,



Joe McVey

Commissioner