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Sinn Féin

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Nuacht rannas/News release

Nationalists Attacked by RUC

Sinn Féin Party Chairperson Michel McLaughlin has tonight accused the RUC of "engaging in systematic harassment and brutality toward nationalist protesters in Bellaghy and north Belfast who were peacefully seeking to oppose triumphalist orange marches passing through their areas."

Mr McLaughlin said:

"While the RUC will seek to use the confrontation at Drumcree as evidence of an even handed approach the reality is that it was the actions and behaviour of David Trimble and Ian Paisley last year which forced the RUC into taking a stand against this particular march.

Elsewhere however it has been very much business as usual. Orange and loyalist mobs have been given free rein to block roads, hijack vehicles and engage in mass intimidation.

In stark contrast nationalists who have sought to peacefully protest against triumphalist orange marches have found themselves on the receiving end of RUC batons in Bellaghy and North Belfast.

Clearly, it is not good enough that isolated nationalist communities are left to stand alone against the weight of orange mobs and the RUC.

This difficult issue of orange marches needs to be tackled on a six county wide basis with all sides being prepared to sit down and discuss an acceptable accommodation. The Orange and Unionist leaders must stop saying no to dialogue."

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