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NEWS

ROUND-THE-CLOCK GUARD ON LOYALIST

LEADING loyalist Jackie Mahood is being guarded around the clock at his Belfast home, after surviving a UVF assassination bid four weeks ago.

The 44-year-old former PUP talks delegate was released from hospital last weekend, three weeks after he was seriously wounded in his taxi office at Ligoniel, in the north of the city.

Close associates say he is being guarded by supporters at his fortified

By ALAN MURRAY

house, because of fears of a further attempt on his life.

Intelligence reports have established that the murder bid on Mahood was carried out by two minor players from the UVF's D company in the Ballysillan area, where Mahood has strong support.

Police know the three reasons put forward for the attack on him, which was then sanctioned by

the UVF's Brigade Staff in Belfast.

The attempt on Mahood's life has caused considerable anger in loyalist circles, and it is feared that elements loyal to the north Belfastmen may carry out a revenge attack against a leading UVF figure loyal to the Belfast leadership.

Such a move would further destabilise the UVF's ceasefire, which is facing growing criticism from rank and file elements.

The murder of GAA figure Garry Devlin has underlined the already fragmenting situation in UVF circles in north Belfast.

One security source said: "It was a UVF gun with previous traces, but was it a disgruntled UVF element that carried out the murder? Or was it a small group that has defected to the LVF, and taken some weapons with them? Either way, it's a major problem for the UVF Brigade Staff".