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Interview with Sam Cushnahan of  
"Families Against Intimidation and Terror - FAIT"  
Punishment Beatings  
BBC Good Mornig Ulster  
3 December 1996

Interviewer Behind this catalogue of numbers, there is a catalogue of suffering.

Cushnahan That's very true and some of these injuries that are inflicted on these people as a result of these punishment shootings are very very severe and very barbaric.

Interviewer Has the nature of the violence perpetrated against the victims of these beatings and shootings changed ?

Cushnahan Yes, and the punishments now are much more severe than putting a bullet in someone's knee and for instance, some time ago, a young lad was taken out of a home in Ardoyne and he was hung up from spikes, the spikes went through his legs. He was left dangling on these spikes for almost an hour. That was very very severe.

Interviewer And yet it does appear, does it not, as if there is a tolerance, an enforced tolerance some would argue, but nonetheless, an apparent tolerance of these beatings in the communities in which they happen ?

Cushnahan Yes, well it's a well known fact that the reason these beatings are carried out, I mean this has all happened since the ceasefire as well, since the first ceasefire, they



maintained power and control in these areas. People in these areas are afraid to speak out and that's one of the reasons why they tolerate this.

Interviewer Does it alter people's behaviour, because, it's argued, isn't it that this is the paramilitaries taking law enforcement into their own hands ?

Cushnahan That's exactly what these paramilitaries are attempting to do. They see themselves as community police.

interviewer Does it alter the behaviour of those on whom they perpetrate this violence ?

Cushnahan I don't think it alters the behaviour of those people at all. I think it's despicable that these people that are carrying out these acts are criminals. It's a criminal act that they are doing and it's certainly not justified and they should allow these people that they're punishing to use the democratic process. They should go to court. After all, those that are carrying out these acts, if they were apprehended by the security forces, the first thing they would do would be to throw their arms up and want to be taken to court.

Interviewer Is the Prime Minister right, then, in making an end to punishment beatings one measure of how lasting and genuine a renewed IRA ceasefire would be ?

Cushnahan I think it's very important that if there is to be another IRA ceasefire then the IRA have to prove that it's going to be genuine. They will have to stop these punishment beatings, several months beforehand, to allow people to believe that the ceasefire is going to be genuine.

Interviewer Just a final point to you. The difficulty we've had is, of course, some see it that the same would be required, presumably, of Loyalist paramilitaries and yet even as Loyalists are officially on ceasefire, Loyalists punishment beatings, so called, have continued almost on the same level as those of Republicans ?



Cushnahan That's very true. Well, Loyalists will also have to stop these punishment beatings.

END.

**Punishment Beatings - Comments by Eileen Bell and Minister Wheeler**

**BBC Radio Ulster 11 am**

**3 December 1996**

Commentator An Alliance delegate to the peace talks says she's horrified by a marked rise in so called punishment beatings. Councillor Eileen Bell said anyone with influence among those who carry out such atrocities should unequivocally condemn them. She was reacting to figures given by the Security Minister Sir John Wheeler, who said this year's total was already more than fifty up on last year's total of two hundred and seventeen.

Sir John Wheeler It is quite unacceptable that society in Northern Ireland should be so tolerant about them. So little is done, not enough people in places that matter condemn these attacks, whether they come from the provisional IRA or from the so-called Loyalists, it doesn't matter. They are criminal attacks, they are doing a great deal of harm to individuals, but they are harming everybody who lives in Northern Ireland.

END.