



▲ Ballymurphy families' press conference with Gerry Adams

Ballymurphy's 'Bloody Sunday'



■ BY LAURA FRIEL

RELATIVES of 11 people killed by the same British Army regiment months before they went on to murder 14 civil rights marchers in Derry on Bloody Sunday have called for an international investigation into the killings.

Over a period of three days in August 1971, 11 people were killed by the British Army's Parachute Regiment in west Belfast's Ballymurphy area. Many of those killings share remarkable similarities to those carried out five months later in Derry's Bogside.

All of those who died were unarmed civilians. One of those killed was a parish priest as he gave the Last Rites to another victim. Another was a mother of eight who had gone to the assistance of one of those injured. Some were shot dead as they waved white flags to signal their peaceful intent.

Those who died posed no threat to the soldiers who killed them. None of the victims was killed as a result of crossfire. Some were shot on the ground when they were already mortally wounded. Some of the injured were denied medical attention and further brutalised by British soldiers.

Speaking of the Saville Report, British Prime Minister David Cameron said that Bloody Sunday

was not the defining story of the British Army's record in Ireland. Speaking in support of the Ballymurphy families at a press conference in Belfast the day after the release of the Saville Report, west Belfast MP Gerry Adams said the British Prime Minister was wrong.

"Bloody Sunday is the defining

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GERRY ADAMS

story of the British Army in Ireland," he insisted.

"The Ballymurphy and the Springhill massacres are examples of this. In Ballymurphy, months before Bloody Sunday, we have another striking example of the brutality with which the Paras acted and how the British system connived in a cover-up.

"Paratroopers killed others in Belfast in the same period, including a 14-year-old boy in Lenadoon, a 17-year-old in the Clonard area, a student teacher from Downpatrick

and Robert McKinnie and Robert Johnstone from the Shankill.

"Six months after Bloody Sunday, on July 9th 1972, they shot dead five people in Springhill," said Adams.

"The British Government in acknowledging the wrong done in Derry must also acknowledge the wrong done in Ballymurphy and elsewhere."

Briege Voyle, whose mother Joan Connolly was shot dead, said at the press conference that Bloody Sunday need never have happened if the soldiers who shot and killed people in Ballymurphy had been held to account for their actions.

John Teggart, whose father Daniel was shot 14 times by paratroopers, said the Saville Report claimed Bloody Sunday was a result of a few out-of-control paratroopers but the same regiment had carried out similar atrocities over three days in Ballymurphy and then, after Derry, returned to Belfast to carry out more.

Carmel Quinn, whose brother John Laverty was shot dead when he attempted to help other victims, said that, just like Bloody Sunday, those killed were unarmed civilians branded gunmen and gun-runners by the British Army to cover up their own crimes.

"We don't want another Saville. We have no confidence in the British investigating themselves. We need an independent, international investigation."