
EX-LOYALIST PARAMILITARY KILLED IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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A prominent member of a Protestant paramilitary group has been shot dead in Belfast. Politicians on both sides of the power-sharing government condemned the killing.

Senior politicians in Northern Ireland on Monday expressed shock at the murder of John Boreland, a prominent member of the Protestant paramilitary group Ulster Defense Association (UDA). Boreland survived a previous murder attempt two years ago.

First Minister Arlene Foster, who leads a Catholic-Protestant power-sharing government in the UK province, said she was "shocked and disgusted" to hear of the murder after Boreland was shot dead by unknown assailants.

Deputy leader Martin McGuinness, from the Catholic party Sinn Fein, "unreservedly" condemned the attack as a "shameful" act.

"There can be no justification for the murder of a well-known loyalist in northern Belfast," McGuinness said.

The UDA reportedly killed more than 200 Catholic civilians during the decades of violence that plagued Northern Ireland. However, the paramilitary group largely upheld a ceasefire since 1994.

In 2010, the UDA scrapped their weapons in front of independent monitors, marking the complete disarmament of the main rival paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland.

While a peace deal largely ended the bloody conflict in 1998, a report produced jointly by Northern Ireland's police and British intelligence agency MI5 found that many of the paramilitary groups continued to exist, though they were not planning attacks.

The report said that although the UDA's main parts were committed to sustainable peace, elements were still involved in violence, acting "almost completely autonomously."