**Freedom For All Ireland – Dolores Desch – 15 April 2021**

**Christmas Appeal:** The 2020-2021 Christmas Appealis winding down and I want to thank all of you for your support. The cutoff date for the current appeal is April 30. What that means is that all donations received by that date will be applied to the 2020-2021 Christmas Appeal. All donations received after will be applied to the 2021-2022 Christmas Appeal. I recently emailed a copy of the current list of donations from each entity to all State Presidents, State FFAI chairs and FFAI subscribers. As a reminder, please send your donations directly to me at: 20 Arlene Ave. Albany, NY 12203. Please include the check payable to**:** LAOH, Inc., the full name of your State, County, Division making the donation and a contact name with email address. Also, you may designate the donation to any of the following groups: Relatives for Justice, Holy Cross Trust, St. Patrick's Center-Downpatrick, Cairde, Belfast National Graves, Down Patriot Graves, EALU, Tyrone, New Lodge Commemoration Committee, Conway Mill Trust, Tyrone AOH, Bridges Beyond Boxing, Belfast, Green Cross, Omagh Basketball, Omagh Choir, Duchas-Oiriall, Ballymurphy Families Committee, Bloody Sunday Trust - Museum of Free Derry, Tyrone National Graves, The Witness Project-Sean Murray, The Pat Finucane Center.

**News from the North of Ireland:** Riots initiated by Loyalist protestshave caused destruction of property as well as increased tension at interfaces with Nationalist neighborhoods. Multiple factors have exacerbated tensions in the loyalist community and resulted in protests for the past two weeks aimed primarily at the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The protests were attributed to several issues including a decision by the PSNI to not charge Sinn Fein members with breaching COVID regulations back in July of 2020 when there was a large turnout for the Bobby Storey Funeral. Loyalists objected to this decision which they considered to be special treatment shown to the Nationalist community. In addition, they are have objected to the Brexit protocol which was decided over a year ago but implemented in January of this year. The protocol allows for goods and people to move freely between the North and South of Ireland. In order to apply the necessary customs checks on goods coming in from the UK to the EU, rather than imposing a land border between the North and South which would undoubtedly result in renewed violence, they placed the border in the Irish Sea. Goods are checked upon arrival to the island of Ireland from the UK. While there is no doubt that this has saved many businesses, farms and jobs in the North of Ireland from going under, rather than seeing the benefit of retaining some privileges of the European Union, loyalists see this as a separation from the UK and a loss of their ‘British Identity”. Currently there are many people in the Nationalist community who are patrolling the streets to deter youths from getting dragged into the fray. Father Gary Donegan of Holy Cross was on the Hibernian webinar on April 15 talking about the need for leadership and discussion and we pray that this comes quickly.

**Webinars:** We recently hosted a webinar titled “Women in the Conflict – Strength-Trauma-Courage” with Andree Murphy and Poilin Quinn from Relatives for Justice. Both shared their experiences and thoughts on what impact the ‘Troubles’ had on their lives and the lives of others, particularly women who were many times underserved by programs and compensation schemes. For those of you who missed it, you can find it on our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5uTpdXYs3w> The actual discussion starts about 7 minutes into the recording. Many thanks to Marilyn Madigan, Brianna Curran, Marianne McFarland and Sharon McGrath for their technical expertise and support in making this a success.

**Pat Finucane Case:** Geraldine Finucane has won the right to legally challenge the British Government in their decision to not hold a public inquiry into the state collusion in the murder of her husband Pat who was gunned down in their family home in 1989 by loyalist paramilitaries colluding with British state agents. In November of 2020, Secretary of State Brandon Lewis denied the request for an inquiry despite many previous assertions that there was government collusion in the murder. These assertions include a decision by the UK Supreme Court in 2019 and statement by former Prime Minister David Cameron following publication of the de Silva Report in 2012 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/dec/12/david-cameron-pat-finucane-murder> . This decision was made under the premise that other police reviews will first need to run their course. To date, the Finucanes have received no notification of any police reviews. Once again it appears to be a case of justice delayed, a tactic used to put off cases where the government and its agents would be implicated. On April 15 of this year, Justice Scoffield, in the High Court in Belfast, granted leave for Geraldine Finucane’s new judicial review proceedings and listed the case for a full hearing in June.

**Please make sure your Division has an FFAI appointee** who willreceive and relay the latest information on the news, issues and programs affecting those living in the north of Ireland. FFAI information is readily available on our national website page and Facebook Page. I am also happy to assist if you need any help. Please like, follow and share our FFAI Page <https://ladiesaoh.com/freedom-for-all-ireland/> which contains updated information as well as FFAI news. If you are not receiving my emails, please send me your email address. As always, if you have any questions or would like more information please contact me at [laohnationalffai@gmail.com](mailto:laohnationalffai@gmail.com). Thank you for all of your support for Freedom For All Ireland.

Go raibh maith agat.