



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### IRA still active in terrorist activities



**Irish prime minister Bertie Ahern has claimed that the IRA is still training and recruiting new members.**

Back in April, Mr. Ahern told the Dublin parliament that some IRA members had moved on to criminality, according to a report given to Irish Justice Minister Michael McDowell. The IRA's activities are still continuing, according to a report from the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) which has just recently been published. It concludes that the IRA is still recruiting and training young people in the use of guns and bombs.

The report warns of a continuing drift by paramilitary groups into crime and evaluates allegations of money laundering. It comments on changes in the IRA leadership which have reduced input by Sinn Fein. Referring to IRA involvement in the murder of Belfast man Robert McCartney in January, the report said it did not believe the IRA leadership had authorised the killing. However, it did say IRA members had been involved. "We do not believe that the central PIRA leadership sanctioned it in advance but those concerned may have believed that they were acting at the direction of a local senior PIRA member at the scene," it stated. A special IMC report in February dealt with the Northern Bank robbery alone. It concluded that the IRA was responsible for the heist and that some Sinn Fein leaders sanctioned the theft.

The new report is said to conclude that the IRA has been laundering the money through a network of businesses and scams. It is also expected to censure the IRA and Sinn Fein for not doing all they could to solve the Robert McCartney murder, which was carried out by IRA members.

The IMC relies heavily on information from state agencies such as the garda, the PSNI and customs. However, it has a high level of access to intelligence and conducts an independent assessment to ensure that the information is accurate and has been correctly interpreted. The report reflects security concerns that the IRA remains "battle ready" and is continuing to train, recruit and target. It still has access to a large amount of arms and Semtex. Garda intelligence shows that recruitment is particularly evident in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and the northeast.

Briefings from the gardai this year led Michael McDowell, the justice minister, to say that the IRA was turning itself into a lightly armed enforcement wing for a revolutionary political movement "through violent and criminal means".