



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

William Frazer arrested



William Frazer, leader of Families Acting for Innocent Relatives, was arrested by Kent police as he prepared to meet with representatives of the DUP at Leeds Castle, where the “peace talks’ took place in mid-September. Five members of Mr. Frazer’s family were murdered by the IRA. FAIR representatives were in the Ramada Hotel making themselves available after lunch for a meeting with the DUP, when they were stopped and detained. When asked why, no explanation was given except that their presence was noticed at the protest outside the gates. When asked why they were being treated differently, they drew the conclusion that members of Sinn Fein had taken exception to their being there. Civil servants had instructed police to hold them. At that stage, in order to prove the point that they were discriminated against, Willy refused to leave the premises and was promptly arrested. A number of officers handcuffed and man-handled him out through a large group of media representatives. This is an outrage, when we see a victim arrested and terrorists being treated as statesmen.

Clearly members of Sinn Fein/IRA do not like to be reminded of who they are and what they have done, by the victims they tried to destroy. His arrest stands in glaring contrast to the thousands of pounds spent on hospitality for Sinn Fein/IRA. Sinn Fein/IRA ought to be behind bars, not their victims. The victims came to Leeds Castle to stage a peaceful protest in order to ensure that they were not forgotten. Obviously, they have become such an annoyance and embarrassment to the British Government that they must be removed from the scene, physically in William’s case. Innocent victims, whose innocence no-one can question, have become victims again by the machinations of the State and their cohorts, Sinn Fein/IRA. There will be few households who have lost loved ones or have been affected by the IRA’s terror campaign who will not understand the motives for his arrest. Having been alienated, downtrodden, and ignored for 30 years, history is repeating itself right on the doorstep of the British establishment.

Setting the record straight Statement issued by FAIR on their return to Northern Ireland.

Members of FAIR returned to Northern Ireland on Saturday (Sept 18th), tired but happy that they had brought the issue of innocent victims right to the heart of the political agenda at Leeds Castle. The British and Irish governments had, at the taxpayers’ expense, taken our politicians away from the province to insulate them from their electorates. The aim was to secret them away, and force them into a deal, letting them worry later about spinning and selling it to their people at home. We warned against this deviation from democracy and mounted a peaceful protest outside the gates of the castle in order to undo the government’s best laid plans. Each time the politicians entered or left the talks they were faced with the actual reality of victims and their views proclaimed on banners and



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posters.

The protest which succeeded by making victims an issue was well supported not just by victims' groups across the country, but also many locals who stopped and offered their support. The DUP to their credit also stopped and indeed met our delegation on a number of occasions to update us on developments. The government's plans to exclude the people of Northern Ireland failed as the secrecy they tried to create was destroyed by our presence. Our aim was to remind Sinn Fein/IRA, the other parties and the public exactly who Republicans are and what they have done. Our banners called for the disbandment of the IRA and drew attention to the terrorist genocide they are responsible for.

Our success can best be measured by the reaction from Sinn Fein/IRA and their apologists in the Northern Ireland Office. Together they tried but failed to silence and exclude the victims. As each day we met with press and politicians at the Ramada Hotel our efforts obviously annoyed Sinn Fein/IRA and the NIO Civil Servants. Together they put pressure on the police to exclude us. Their move backfired as the media covered the outrageous scene of William Frazer being arrested and imprisoned while the terrorists were wined and dined. However the facts of the matter have become clouded as the government tried to play down the incident.

Therefore we seek to set the record straight. At lunchtime on Friday, William Frazer and William Wilkinson had a meal in the hotel and met a number of journalists to brief them on developments. They were also at the hotel to make it easier to meet members of the DUP for a proposed meeting in the afternoon. At about three o'clock the two victims' workers were leaving the hotel when they were identified, stopped and detained by Kent Constabulary.

The officer indicated that they had been looking for the two men and had obviously been instructed to remove them. The area of the hotel where they were stopped was open to the public and indeed other guests and hotel customers were walking in and out past. Mr. Frazer demanded to know why he was being treated differently and refused to leave until an explanation was given. Who had identified them and what were they supposed to have done wrong? Why were they being singled out and harassed? A senior officer refused to be drawn and no real explanation was offered by the police. They realising they had no grounds to detain the men then spoke to the manager who obviously on their instructions asked the two men to leave. Again he could not offer a reason and it was obvious he was simply doing the police's dirty work. Mr. Frazer rightly felt he was being discriminated against and that political pressure had prompted the matter. Clearly the government did not like the coverage FAIR was getting and the fact a victim was at Leeds Castle. William refused to leave and was arrested, handcuffed and man-handled from the building. Subsequent media reports confuse the matter by claiming he was causing a disruption in the hotel and was asked to leave by management. Others claim he disrupted a wedding. Both are inaccurate and do not reflect the fact that Mr. Frazer was detained without reason, and was removed from the building in which he was a customer for no reason. The involvement of the manager was at the request of the police to cover their initial mistake. As a group we demand to know who issued the original order to stop and remove Mr. Frazer.

Mr. Frazer was held for a time in Maidstone Police Station while his plight was raised by Dr. Paisley with the Prime Minister. Three members of the DUP negotiating team, Iris Robinson



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MP, Arlene Foster MLA and Paul Berry MLA, visited and supported William in the police station.

He was released without charge, which again points to the lack of reason for the initial arrest. As a group we can draw no other conclusion than his arrest was political and a crude attempt to silence the voice of victims. To that end we intend to get to the bottom of who was responsible and our legal team has already set the wheels in motion to challenge both the Kent Constabulary, the Ramada Hotel group, and any media who misrepresented the events. The entire incident caused untold distress to members of FAIR whom William was representing. Many including his own family especially his sick mother who watched her son being forced into a police van, victims across Northern Ireland who hoped they would be valued and included in the Leeds talks were left sickened and disillusioned. The protest was aimed to raise victims' rights and ensure they are part of any lasting settlement in Northern Ireland but the government has sent out a clear signal that they have no time for victims. They would rather imprison them than the terrorists who are treated like statesmen. If this is an indication of the treatment victims can expect, then we, as a group, will not be able to support any deal.

Our only hope is the DUP's firm position and its current willingness to include and support victims' issues. As a group we will continue to campaign for a fair deal for victims, and thank all those who have contacted us offering support.

FAIR website <http://www.victims.org.uk/>