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## Troubles victims 'should be heard'

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AN ex-RUC officer who lost both his arms in an IRA attack says victims of the Troubles are not a danger to the peace process and should be heard.

"Some people want the peace process to move forward and want everyone to be on board the bus. But some people cannot get their wheelchair on," Dr Michael Paterson says.

The peace process is the right thing for some but some others cannot make the journey due to the profound hurts they suffered during the Troubles, he says.

There are good community groups working with the issues, the former RUC constable says, but some people don't wish to engage with them.

"Somehow these people need to be brought on board and heard. If there are people who are disgruntled it is important their voices are heard.

"Even people who are hurt want to see peace. It is only the dissident republicans who want to see the conflict continued."

He has met ex-RUC officers who have seen many colleagues murdered and see the RUC as having been "airbrushed" from history: "Many of them now ask 'what was it all for?'

"The end of the RUC hurt them and there was anger initially but later there was acceptance – 'If that was the price of peace, OK'. Though others still do not accept the change."

He adds: "The Victims Commission are good people who want to move things on. But from what I am hearing on the ground, victims feel they are being put in the cupboard and forgotten about.

"The analogy from Victorian times is that the person with mental illness is locked up and forgotten about."

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