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BILLY ARMSTRONG MLA

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Armstrong urges retention of Full-Time Reserve to tackle Dissident threat

Mid-Ulster MLA Billy Armstrong has urged the Chief Constable to reconsider the decision to scrap the Full-Time Reserve in light of the ongoing threat from so-called dissident republicans.

The UUP was speaking following revelations that Full-Time Reserve officers were deployed in “F” District, which includes the Cookstown area of Mid-Ulster.

Mr Armstrong, himself a former member of the RUC Part-Time Reserve said;

“I am opposed to any plans to reduce the number of police officers – especially experienced police officers such as the Full-Time Reserve – available to help combat crime and terrorism in our society.

Like many others, I am opposed to the decision to scrap the Full-Time Reserve. I am very concerned to learn that some of these officers were allocated to F District as part of “a number of actions implemented in direct response to the current Dissident republican threat” and this raises the question as to what will happen once these officers are no longer available?

Military support for the Police is no longer seen as a viable option due to the reluctance to put troops back on the streets, so the question has to be asked as to just who or what will be relied upon to make up the shortfall?

This question will not go away. The community needs credible assurances that the current and future Chief Constable will have sufficient resources – particularly in terms of experienced Officers – to protect and serve the community. I have no doubt that the loss of the Full-Time Reserve will seriously hinder this.”

ENDS