

## High judicial ethics will defeat killers

**T**HE discovery of a weapons cache in Lurgan, Co Armagh, by police investigating dissident republican violence was an important and potentially life-saving development.

Two pistols, a shotgun and a large amount of ammunition were recovered during a search of waste ground on Friday, although no arrests were made.

It is not clear if the find was the direct result of a tip-off but it remains essential that any information which may become known about paramilitary activity is immediately forwarded to police.

Citizens from all sections of society have a heavy responsibility to take the steps necessary to prevent further bloodshed by tiny groups of extremists.

The appalling murder of Constable Ronan Kerr in Omagh on April 2 horrified ordinary people in all parts of Ireland and graphically illustrated the threat which exists to the entire community.

Constable Kerr, a courageous young recruit to the PSNI, symbolised the cross-community approach to policing which has the overwhelming support of both nationalists and unionists.

Those who targeted him so ruthlessly are using evil tactics which not only comprehensively failed to advance any political objectives in the past but delivered only anguish and suffering on an enormous scale.

It is vital that the perpetrators of the outrage, together with all others who are prepared to kill in the pursuit of a discredited cause, are brought to justice.

However, there will also be unease that, by last night, three suspects arrested in connection with the murder had been in custody without charge for periods of nine, 10 and 12 days respectively.

In the past, binding legal guidelines in Northern Ireland dictated that suspects should either be charged or released after a maximum of seven days of questioning by detectives.

When permission for detention to be extended for up to 28 days was introduced under the UK's 2006 Terrorism Act, it was said to be a specific response to the international campaign of organisations like al-Qaida.

It will be noted that the same legislation has now been used in Northern Ireland on a number of occasions, even though the British home secretary Theresa May said only last year that it was a temporary measure and her government would be "looking to reduce it over time".

The individuals who assassinated Constable Kerr in cold blood as he prepared to drive to work had no interest whatsoever in any aspect of basic human rights.

As long as the authorities take an entirely different approach and insist on maintaining the highest possible judicial standards at all times, the murderers will be marginalised and ultimately defeated.



■ **COME-BY:** A man m

## Canvassers risk t

**C**ANVASSERS could not be the door. Canvassers of all shapes and sizes in the letterbox outside was even one from a discredited candidate who left his constituency.

Don't get me wrong, I will certainly vote but I don't respond to everyone's message claiming the same wins blaming each other for the public know that the assembly, like the one in Northern Ireland, is dysfunctional. Both assemblies are marked by stalemate and inaction. The current incumbent First Minister and Deputy First Minister have made a better hash of the job than I could do right by making good use of the opportunities and options available but good government is a joined-up thinking and action plan frustratingly missing piece in Northern Ireland politics. Yet as they say God loves the tramp the streets in all directions deserve some credit for the flame of local democracy. The torchbearers are usually zealots often complemented by candidates' reluctantly family and friends. It's a difference - the zealots engage on the doorstep while the friends usually want to get away as quickly as possible and the perplexed voter asks a question. So far I have escaped the challenge and thankfulness are fantastic havens from harassment.

However, two events last week re-evaluate just how important they really are. Firstly, there was a bomb attack on a SDLP office in Mid Ulster. Then there