

'We only sought damages from RTE after they refused to apologise over claim of homophobia'

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Brendan O'Connor

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Irish Times columnist Breda O'Brien has stated that she and other members of the Iona Institute sought libel damages after RTE refused to apologise.

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In an article in today's Irish Times newspaper, Ms O'Brien said she was not remotely interested in money but agreed to accept damages because "people don't take you seriously unless there is some sort of settlement".

She said RTE had "walked itself into defamation case and then offered a completely inadequate response which is a right of reply".

"All we wanted was an apology and was offered a completely inadequate response which was a right of reply. It is not up to you to defend yourself. It is up to the organisation that defamed you," she said.

She described the reported €85,000 as "fairly accurate". It was reported that €40,000 went to columnist [John Waters](#), with the remainder going to five members of the Iona Institute.

She told the newspaper that it was ironic that Rory O'Neill had accused her of homophobia on the Saturday Night Show two weeks ago as she had recently written an article condemning homophobia.

"My article was about homophobia and liberal intolerance and how we needed to tackle both.

"Supposing somebody was called racist instead of homophobic, do you think that person would stand back and say that is fair comment? That's the analogy. I don't accept that I'm homophobic," she said.

Irish Independent



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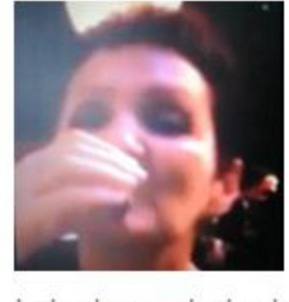
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