

Alliance discusses rule of law challenges with Secretary of State

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An Alliance delegation has met with the Secretary of State to explore potential approaches to restoring confidence in the political institutions and ensuring the integrity of the rule of law. The party has also briefed the Irish and United States Governments on the current situation.

Speaking after the meeting, Alliance MLA Stephen Farry said Northern Ireland's political system was in a "very deep crisis".

"We had a constructive meeting, focused on finding solutions to the present challenges. People deserve a system of government based on trust and partnership, and underpinned by the rule of law. At present, we have an almost zero-sum challenge, where if one leading party of government isn't excluded, the other one will potentially walk out.

"We have indicated we will respect the independent police investigation into the murder of Kevin McGuigan. Any decision we take regarding an exclusion motion will be based on the prevailing evidence at the time.

"Alliance has consistently stood up for the integrity of the political process. We have also long advocated that participation of parties in government should be based on full and unambiguous commitment to the rule of law. We will make our judgments based on the evidence against these standards.

"We also discussed the wider challenge of dealing with the ongoing reality of paramilitarism in our society and the continued existence of paramilitary organisations in various guises. Recent events have crystallised and confirmed the status quo is not sustainable.

"We made clear any activity subverting the rule of law needed to be effectively challenged by the state and fresh thinking was required so people can feel safe and illegal structures dismantled. Fresh initiatives and progress in this space can help provide restored confidence in the political process."

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