

Press release

BIIGC APRIL 2024 JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

A meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (BIIGC) took place in London on 29 April 2024.

From: **Northern Ireland Office** (</government/organisations/northern-ireland-office/>), **The Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris** (</government/people/chris-heaton-harris/>), **Lord Caine** (</government/people/lord-caine/>) and **The Rt Hon Steve Baker** (</government/people/steve-baker/>)

Published 29 April 2024

This was published under the 2022 to 2024 Sunak Conservative government



A meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (BIIGC) took place at 100 Parliament Street in London on 29 April 2024.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was represented by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris MP; the Minister of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Steve Baker MP; and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Lord Caine.

The Government of Ireland was represented by the Tánaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Micheál Martin TD.

The Conference was established under Strand Three of the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement “to promote bilateral cooperation at all levels on all matters of mutual interest within the competence of the UK and Irish Governments”.

The Conference discussed:

Legacy

In a wide-ranging discussion of legacy matters, the UK Government and the Government of Ireland considered ongoing domestic and interstate legal proceedings in relation to the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023, including the recent Northern Ireland High Court judgment. The UK Government set out current progress on the implementation of the Act, including the establishment of the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery.

UK and Irish Ministers discussed the publication of the terms of reference for the UK Omagh Bombing Inquiry, and the importance of both governments facilitating the full provision of answers for the families affected.

Finally, the UK Government and the Government of Ireland discussed issues of concern in respect to individual legacy cases including the Dublin/ Monaghan bombings.

Political Stability

The UK Government and the Government of Ireland welcomed that the Northern Ireland Executive, Assembly and North South Ministerial Council have been restored to operation. They agreed it is important for the people of Northern Ireland to have a stable, locally-elected and accountable government.

Both Governments agreed to continue working together to support stability in Northern Ireland in accordance with the three stranded approach established in the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement.

Security Co-operation

The UK Government and the Government of Ireland discussed the current security situation including the reduction of the threat level in Northern Ireland to SUBSTANTIAL in March 2024. This shows the progress that Northern Ireland has made, and continues to make, towards a more peaceful, more prosperous and safer society. They welcomed the excellent ongoing cooperation between the PSNI and An Garda Síochána in tackling terrorism, paramilitarism and associated criminality.

The UK Government and the Government of Ireland discussed how further progress could be made towards ending paramilitarism and gave consideration to the recommendations made by the Independent Reporting Commission and others including in evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on this issue. Both Governments agreed to take forward work, including through joint support for independent scoping and engagement, to assess whether there is merit in and support for a formal process that ensures the transition to disbandment of paramilitary groups given the continuing impact of violence and harm in communities.

The UK Government and the Government of Ireland also discussed the issue of irregular migration. Both Governments agreed to monitor this issue closely and noted the importance of

continuing to work together on these matters.

Future Meetings

It was agreed that the Conference would meet again in autumn 2024.

Published 29 April 2024

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