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Growing concern at delay in policing and justice transfer – Ó Caoláin

Published: 24 August, 2008

Sinn Féin Dáil leader Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin has said there is widespread and growing concern among republicans at the failure to transfer policing and justice powers from London to Belfast which should have happened by May of this year. He said the Irish Government needs to "get its act together" with regard to the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

Deputy Ó Caoláin was speaking today (Sunday) in Templeport, Co. Cavan at the 50th anniversary commemoration of the death of James Crossan, Sinn Féin Organiser for Co. Cavan, who was murdered by the RUC on 24 August 1958.

During the course of his speech Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin said:

"There is now widespread and growing concern among republicans at the failure to transfer policing and justice powers from London to Belfast in due time.

"When Sinn Féin changed our policy on policing in the North, accepting that a new beginning was being made, it was with the prospect that policing and justice powers would be transferred by May of this year. It is now the end of August and we do not even have a date for transfer. This is totally unacceptable.

"Our negotiators are doing their utmost. But the DUP, the British government and the Irish government should note that the patience of republicans should not be taken for granted.

"Our Ministers are not in the Executive to fill seats, to make careers or to be administrators. Their mandate is to bring about lasting and fundamental change. That is why Sinn Féin put them there.

"If we are forced to conclude that change will not be forthcoming from the Executive then we will have no option but to pull out our Ministers and seek to put pressure where responsibility ultimately lies, which is on the British Government in London.

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"It is time also that the Irish Government got its act together. We need to see a renewed and reinvigorated approach. The reality is that the Irish Government has been soft-peddalling on the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement because it equates progress with electoral advances for Sinn Féin.

"No doubt Fianna Fáil in particular will object to this analysis of their approach. Very well, then, let them prove us wrong.

"Let them exert public pressure for the transfer of policing and justice powers, as well as the other outstanding issues, including Acht na Gaeilge.

"Let them prioritise the all-Ireland agenda and step up the development of our economy and infrastructure, our public services and business sector on an island basis.

"Above all let them set out a programme for ending partition and reuniting the island and people of Ireland. For our part, we look forward to working with them on that programme." ENDS

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