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Full text of Gerry Adams' speech to Cúige Uladh meeting

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Full text of Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams' speech to Sinn Féin Cúige Uladh meeting in Belfast this afternoon

A chairde, ba mhaith liom fáilte a chur romhaibh go dtí Cumann na Méirleach.

Tá muid anseo chun an ghéarchéim pholaitiúil a phlé, chun RHI a phlé agus an truailliú agus an chalois a bhain leis.

Am na cinniúna atá ann.

I want to welcome all of you here to the Felons.

Today's Cuige plus has been called to address the worsening crisis in the political institutions surrounding the Renewable Heat Initiative and serious allegations of corruption, fraud and incompetence.

The future of the political institutions are at a defining point.

For almost ten years Martin McGuinness has jointly led the Executive.

First with Ian Paisley, then with Peter Robinson, and for almost a year now with Arlene Foster.

Let us be clear about this, it is a good thing that those Unionist leaders took up their positions with us on the Executive.

I and others in Sinn Féin have frequently commended them for doing so.

Let us also be clear that they could never be in government with us entirely on their own terms.

No more than we could be in government with them entirely on our own terms.

Mutual respect, equality and good manners is a necessary requirement to make this work.

Regrettably during most of this time, Martin, and we, have frequently faced deliberate provocation, arrogance and disrespect.

However, under Martin's tolerant and tireless leadership the institutions have continued to operate and progress has been made, for example on the difficult issue of the transfer of policing and justice powers.

Martin has led from the front.

He has led on the issues of equality, reconciliation, and peace building.

At times this has discommoded republicans and nationalists.

But that is the nature of change.

The reality is that without fundamental change a society based on fairness, equality and decency is not attainable.

All of this presents challenges to all of the parties and party leaders, as well as to the Irish and British governments.

There are some who have seen Sinn Féin's attempts to stretch ourselves, to promote reconciliation, to be generous and patient, as a sign of weakness.

It is not a sign of weakness.

It is a sign of strength.

It is a sign of leadership.

Anyone could work within the comfort zone of our own political parties.

That's not leadership.

That's not going to repair a fractured society.

The real test of leadership is to reach out beyond your base.

To reach outside your own comfort zone.

To try to make friends with our enemies - with our opponents.

To make the effort.

Even when the others are churlish, bad mannered or in some cases downright bigoted.

That is the real test of leadership.

And it is a test that the leaders of political unionism and the SDLP are failing.

The political institutions established by the Good Friday Agreement only function effectively and they can only deliver if they have the confidence and support of the people.

If agreements made are honoured.

If there is zero tolerance for corruption.

Níl áit ar bith ann don truailliú!

To achieve this the people's political institutions must be built on foundations of equality and partnership.

The actions of the DUP, despite the generosity of republicans, has been to undermine equality and partnership.

In the ten years since the institutions were re-established Martin and other Sinn Féin ministers and our Assembly team have navigated a way through a number of crises and scandals.

A lot of good work has been done by the Executive and the Assembly and significant progress has been made on many issues, including on cross border and all-Ireland matters.

I want to thank everyone involved.

On other issues there has been little or no progress, for example on a Bill of Rights.

Tá an-dímheas ag an DUP ar an Ghaeilge agus ar phobal na Gaeilge.

Cad é mar is féidir fuath a bheith ag duine ar bith do theanga?

Bhí an cinneadh a ghlac an DUP ar oíche Nollag chun an t-airgead a ghearradh do Líofa iontach maslach ar fad.

Cinneadh aineolach ag duine aineolach.

The DUP has also shown a serious disrespect for the Irish language and to those citizens who wish to live their lives through Gaeilge.

How could anyone hate a language?

The decision on the eve of Christmas to cut funding for the Líofa programme was a very deliberate snub to the Irish language. It was an ignorant decision taken by an ignoramus.

Of course we will forgive him for this.

After he restores the funding and treats our teanga with the respect it deserves.

And there have been other significant issues of contention, including the decision to renege on the Programme for Government commitment on the Long Kesh site; the DUP's resistance to the legacy and truth recovery mechanisms of the Stormont House agreement; the Red Sky scandal and the Project Eagle debacle.

The deliberate flouting of any notion of partnership government by the DUP, and recent remarks in particular by the First Minister about the Executive Office, has caused huge difficulties.

The scandal around the RHI is a scandal created by the DUP.

It has been made worse by the DUP.

It is not an orange and green issue.

It is a question of good governance.

Or in this case of bad governance.

Despite the opportunistic attacks on us from the UUP, the SDLP and others, and despite the understandable concerns in sections of our own electorate, Sinn Féin has offered time and space to the DUP.

We have put forward recommendations to get to the truth of the scandal; to end the misuse of public money and to rebuild confidence.

Go dtí seo tá diúltaithe ag ceannaire an DUP seasamh ar leataobh, gan dochar, go dtí go bhfuil tuairisc tosaigh againn ón fhiosrúchán poiblí isteach in RHI.

Dúirt sí sin arís inné, Níl sé sin maith go leor.

The DUP leader has thus far refused to stand aside, without prejudice, pending a preliminary report by an Independent Investigation to the RHI scandal.

She repeated that refusal yesterday.

That is not good enough.

Arlene Foster has been First Minister for almost a year.

Martin McGuinness has proven his ability to work with the leaders of Unionism.

But this can only be on the basis of partnership and equality.

Martin told her that in a frank conversation on Wednesday.

Arlene Foster is not a Prime Minister.

She is a co-equal partner in the Office of First and Deputy First Minister.

She can continue in that office but only for as long as Sinn Féin allows it.

Sinn Féin has been very clear in what we have been saying.

Our record is there for all to see.

If the First Minister does not take the actions that society desires and deserves and which a sustainable process of change requires, then Sinn Féin will bring this ongoing and totally unacceptable state of affairs to an end.

Today's meeting is part of us charting a way forward.