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Adams comments on Mitchell Principles

Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams commenting today on his party's attitude to the Mitchell principles said:

"Sinn Féin has always taken a very positive and constructive attitude to both the Mitchell Body, to its report and to its principles. Indeed unlike the Unionists we involved ourselves both in the political track as well as in the decommissioning track of the twin-track process.

We made a lengthy written submission, as well as a number of oral submissions and when the report was published I actually said that we would be both constructive and positive and I believed it provided an avenue into all party talks.

That was the day that John Major put the report in the bin. Since then the British have made it a pre-condition to inclusive negotiations.

Our view on Mitchell is quite simple and straightforward. If the British government with its disastrous record of involvement in our country, with its army of occupation, with its repressive apparatus; if the loyalists with their record; or the unionists with their record; if all of these can in all party talks sign up to these principles then surely Sinn Féin can do the same.

The big problem at this point is the British government blocking Sinn Féin from being involved in those talks.

In the context of all party talks, if the other parties sign up to the Mitchell principles, Sinn Féin will make our commitment absolute. All of this is clearly in the context of the constructive and positive way in which we have addressed all matters in this process.

Sinn Féin isn't involved in violence. Sinn Féin has in fact suffered from violence and Sinn Féin's commitment is to remove the causes of violence. What is required are meaningful and inclusive talks to deal with the causes of conflict in this country so that there can be a settlement agreed between all the people of the island.

I am an Irish republican. I want to see British rule in our country ended. We have particular attitudes and policies on issues which we feel need to be dealt with but in terms of a commitment to the principles outlined by Senator Mitchell Sinn Féin doesn't have a problem."

Mr Adams concluded:

I want to see a peace process working. I want to see a complete peace settlement which means the end of all armed actions by all of the forces involved in this dispute. I am not into the politics of condemnation. I never have been. I want to see a proper negotiating process. We will be there on 10 June with a renewed mandate. The British government has to move to accept the fact that those who vote for our party should have the same rights as those who are represented by the other parties. That is the key to all of this.