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SDLP - ASSEMBLY EVENTS ROW HIGHLIGHT DUP AND SINN FEIN CANNOT BE TRUSTED WITH POWER

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SDLP Leader and Foyle MP Mark Durkan MLA has said that if Sinn Fein and the DUP cannot be trusted with respecting the neutrality of Parliament Buildings then how can they be trusted with central power?

Mr Durkan and SDLP Chief Whip Patsy McGlone MLA were speaking after restrictions on cameras in the building were lifted today.

The restrictions were imposed following a row over Sinn Fein's tribute to Mairead Farrell, who was shot dead by the SAS 20 years ago.

In response the DUP proposed that they would hold an event honouring the SAS.

Mr McGlone, MLA for Mid-Ulster, said the row only served to promote division and conflict rather than the reconciliation which people had voted for.

Mr Durkan said: "This whole issue has been an embarrassment from start to finish, initiated by an ill-conceived event staged by Sinn Fein and exacerbated by an ill-considered response by the DUP.

"However, the real issue is to ensure that the Assembly building is a working, neutral and democratic space. All parties have a duty to respect that.

"Both Sinn Fein and the DUP have shown they cannot show that respect as proved with their tit-for-tat sectarian events.

"If these two parties cannot be trusted with this how can they be trusted with central power?"

"We should be here to do business. We should be going about our business of improving the economy and public services instead of indulging in political stunts."

Mr McGlone added: "People voted for a shared future, a compromise and reconciliation.

"Instead the DUP and Sinn Fein are promoting division and conflict in what is essentially a sham fight to protect their own internal positions.

"We in the SDLP are here to safeguard the Agreement, promote good government and look to the future, and not to indulge in sectarian ping-pong."

ENDS

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