



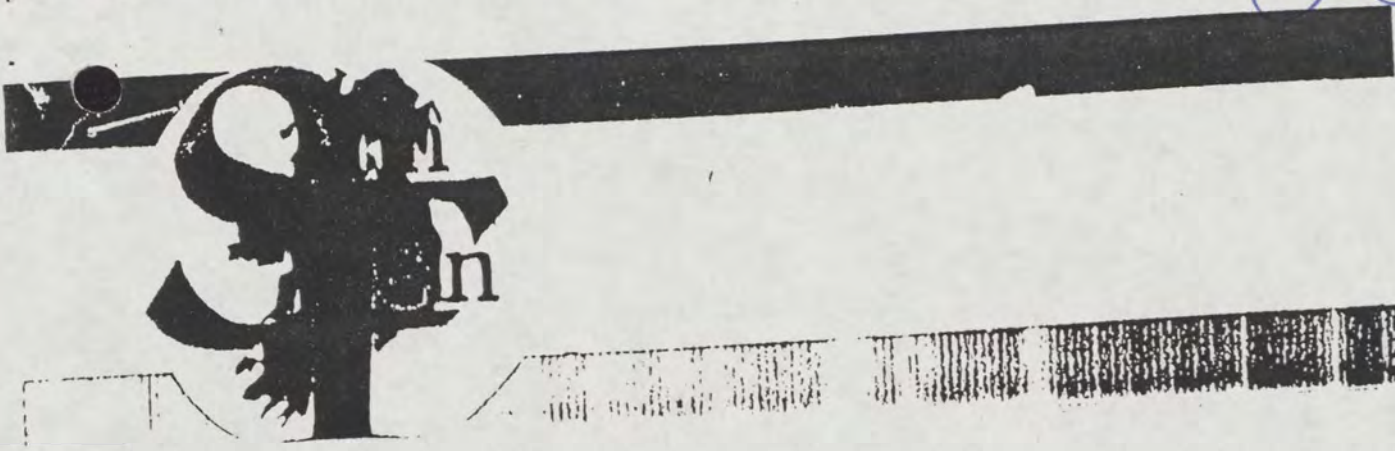
# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

13 April 1995

John Major MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London

A Chara

I wrote to you on 13 February 1995 regarding the refusal of your government to recognise and accept the democratic mandate of Sinn Fein and our right to be treated on the same basis as other democratically mandated political parties. I have not yet received a response to that letter. I am now writing to you again in light of the comments by Patrick Mayhew on Wednesday, 12 April 1995 regarding your government's continued refusal to recognise our mandate and the continued exclusion by you of Sinn Fein from political dialogue. There would not be a peace process without the active involvement of Sinn Fein.

Eight months after the IRA initiative of 31 August 1994, and almost 5 months after the re-commencement of dialogue between Sinn Fein and the British government the discrimination against our party and this treatment of our voters as second class citizens must end.

When Sinn Fein entered the bi-lateral exploratory talks with your officials, we outlined our criteria for these discussions;

- a) to bring an end to the discrimination which our party and our electorate suffer, and;
- b) to work out the logistics of all party peace talks which are the essential next stage in the peace process.

While we have addressed the latter issue as far as is presently possible in the Stormont talks, no progress has yet been made on the former.

The end of the ban on ministerial contact with Sinn Fein at the level of local government shows this to be a purely tactical matter and not a matter of principle.

Sinn Fein entered the renewed dialogue with the British government

in good faith and with a determination to build the peace process. Despite your provocative assertions that Sinn Fein and our voters would have to undergo a process of "decontamination" we underlined the seriousness of our approach by the seniority of the delegation which we sent to meet with your officials. In the course of the five meetings to date there have been exhaustive discussions across a range of issues. Sinn Fein has addressed all issues raised by your representatives.

Furthermore, we have made it clear publicly, and in correspondence with your officials, that we are willing to discuss in a serious and constructive way all relevant issues with a view to their resolution. This includes all issues which you wish to discuss.

However, we are not prepared to subject ourselves to a process of decontamination, to allow our electorate to be treated as second class citizens or to be equated with the representatives of loyalist paramilitaries who have no electoral mandate. Sinn Fein does have an electoral mandate. Your government refuses to recognise that mandate. The peace process if it is to be viable must be based on equality. The position is quite clear. There should be an end to political discrimination. All electorally mandated political parties must be accorded equality of treatment.

In our document, TOWARDS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT 3, presented to your representatives on 16 January, we pointed out that attempts to subvert the integrity of Sinn Fein, or the rights of our electorate, as a means for stalling the peace process, will serve only to undermine and subvert the peace process itself. This must be avoided.

At the meeting of 7 February 1995, the leader of our delegation, Martin McGuinness, formally requested a meeting between Sinn Fein and Patrick Mayhew. We have not received a proper response to our request. I reiterated this request in my letter to you of 13 February 1995. Once again we received no response.

We have been increasingly conscious of the dangers posed to the peace process, especially if your government attempts to force a two track approach to talks, with Sinn Fein in a second track, at a different level and pace from the other parties.

For this reason, and because of our commitment to the peace process, Martin McGuinness and his team has made strenuous and serious efforts to break the impasse created by your refusal to meet with our party at a political level.

Sinn Fein and our voters must now be accorded equality of treatment. Your government should meet with us on the same basis that you are proposing to meet with the other democratically mandated political parties.

We remain convinced that, with political will and openness, an agreed political settlement can be realised. Sinn Fein's commitment to the peace process is absolute. Our desire now is to move forward.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Is mise

*Seobhán O'Staubon*

*PA*  
GERRY ADAMS