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TUESDAY
06/05/2008
08:06:47

McGuinness denies Maze shrine claims

A conflict transformation centre on the site of the former Maze Prison could help people in other trouble zones around the world to learn the lessons of peace building in Northern Ireland, Martin McGuinness insisted today.

Maze shrine 'a red herring'

As fears mounted that the ambitious plan for a multi-sports stadium and conflict transformation centre on the site of the prison could be lost if power sharing ministers could not agree to it, the Sinn Fein Deputy First Minister again moved to dismiss claims that republicans were seeking to have a shrine to terrorism on the site.

Mr McGuinness said: "The business case for a Maze Stadium is currently with the Department of Finance and Personnel. "They will have to make their view of that known and then it will be up to the Executive to deal with that.

"There clearly is a big issue of Belfast-based soccer interests being against the Maze site and some unionists being against the conflict transformation centre.

"Clearly there is a need for a centre. People here, including myself, have been asked to help out in the Middle East and in Iraq, to share our experiences of conflict resolution.

"This issue of a terrorist shrine is being raised as a red herring in order to prevent the centre being established.

"Nobody on the republican side has argued for a shrine in any shape or form but what they have been saying is that we should retain buildings of huge historical importance to this island as part of the centre.

"The fact is there is tremendous interest around the world in us showing how conflict was resolved.

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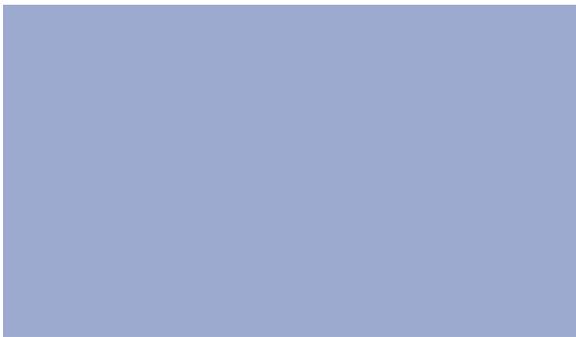
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STARRING: Emile Hirsch, Matthew Fox, Christina Ricci, Susan Sarandon

DETAILS: US / 129mins (PG)

RATING: ★★☆☆☆

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