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#### GERRY ADAMS STATEMENT

Today's full statement by Gerry Adams said:

"I have made it clear over the 18 months since the collapse of the peace process that I would only approach the IRA to restore their cessation if I was confident that their response would be positive.

"This, in my view, required the reconstruction of the two pillars on which the peace process was initially constructed. Firstly, the commitment by the two governments to inclusive peace talks.

"Given that the commitment by the previous British government to inclusive negotiations were reneged on after the IRA cessation of August 1994, what was needed were assurances that inclusive and meaningful negotiations would be in place."

"Specifically; that the negotiations would be without pre-conditions; that the negotiations would be conducted within a stated timeframe; that the negotiation

s would be based on equality of treatment; that there would be no attempt to pre-determine the outcome; that no outcome was precluded; that the negotiations would have a comprehensive agenda; that the decommissioning issue would not be allowed to block negotiations; and finally, that the negotiations would be enhanced by specified confidence-building measures with a particular focus on the equality agenda and demilitarisation, including the issue of prisoners.

"The process of obtaining detail and clarity on these issues has been painstaking but essential.

"Secondly, following intensive contacts it is clear that there is a shared commitment to significant and substantial change, to issues of equality and to demilitarisation on the part of Sinn Fein, the SDLP, the Irish government and Irish-American opinion.

"In addition, I am confident that the mistakes that were made by the former Taoiseach, John Bruton will not be repeated and that Sinn Fein will be accorded full equality of treatment.

"If the political will exists there is the potential to resolve the conflict on the basis of an agreed and democratic peace settlement among all the Irish people. There is an onus on the two governments, and in particular, on the British Government, to demonstrate the political will necessary.

"This also presents an historic challenge to the Unionist leaders because a political will, of necessity, involves fundamental and thorough-going political and constitutional change. There will be no return to Unionist domination.

"As an Irish republican party, Sinn Fein will be guided by our aim of a united Ireland. We will be seeking an end to British rule in Ireland and we will

be asserting the constitutional rights of Irish nationalists. We will also be encouraging the Irish government and others to do likewise. In any agreed political settlement the political allegiance of northern nationalists must be given expression and effect.

"There must, also, be immediate political action to achieve equality of treatment and a speedy demilitarisation of the entire situation, including the release of all those who have been imprisoned as a result of the conflict.

"The IRA leadership assured us that they would respond without delay to our request.

"The Sinn Fein leadership is also prepared, if requested, to provide a detailed report and assessment to any other group."