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Sinn Féin

...news release/ nuacht ráiteas...

For immediate release

8th October 1996

Adams calls for talks

Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams commenting this morning on the bomb attacks in Lisburn has offered "as a matter of urgency to meet with representatives of the British government, the Irish government, the Unionist leadership, the loyalist parties and church leaders in an effort to find a way through this dangerous crisis and to rebuild the peace process". Mr Adams extended his "sympathies to those who were injured yesterday" and expressed his "sense of shock".

Mr Adams said:

"There has been a protracted political vacuum here for some time. We saw the consequences of that in the summer with the events at Drumcree, and the British government's cave-in to unionist threats, with the killing of nationalists by the British army and the loyalists, with the actions of the IRA and with events of yesterday in Lisburn.

"If we don't fill that political vacuum with real talks then there is the risk that it will be filled with the sort of serious incidents we saw yesterday and which we have seen over the summer.

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"I am prepared to rise to the challenge which now confronts us all. I am prepared as a matter of urgency to meet with representatives of the British government, the Irish government, the Unionist leadership, the loyalist parties, and church leaders in an effort to find a way through this dangerous crisis.

"John Major and the unionist and loyalist leaderships have to grasp the nettle. I could put up all sorts of reasons and excuses for not talking to them but I will not do that. It is clear that the overwhelming desire of the people of this island is for a lasting peace and that can only be achieved through dialogue.

"Ten days ago the Middle East was convulsed in conflict. The British government was among the first to call for direct dialogue between the Israelis and Palestinians. The same focus on dialogue as the basis of any conflict resolution process is required here.

"This is a challenging time for people in political leadership and my commitment and Sinn Féin's commitment is to rebuild a process which makes all of what we have seen a thing of the past.

"We need to be talking to each other not at each other.

"We have to remain very focussed on the prize of a lasting peace settlement." ENDS