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** I hope you will
do so. //*

You wrote to the Prime Minister on 31 January and 10 February.

There is a huge credibility gap between what you say in both letters and the actions of the IRA on the ground. Continuing IRA attacks carried out with murderous intent are incompatible with peace and with democracy. *If you were serious about peace - making before the election, you would call for an immediate and lasting ceasefire.**

The Government has repeatedly made clear its commitment to inclusive negotiations and its desire to see Sinn Féin take its place in such negotiations to represent its electorate. But it is also clear what must be done if that is to happen. The IRA must declare an unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire, and actions, words and all the circumstances must be consistent so that the statutory requirements set out in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Ground Rules are met before an invitation to Sinn Féin to participate in the negotiations can be issued.

The process which would need to follow a ceasefire declaration, in order to ^{be} ensure that it was intended to be genuinely unequivocal, was set out in the Government's statement of 28 November. That explained clearly the criteria that would be applied. The Government will not depart from that position; nor will it negotiate

the restoration of a ceasefire which should not have been ended
^{Naturally} But if there remains any genuine uncertainty ^{about the Government's position,} or ~~questions~~ then the
 Government will address them. *That can be addressed.*

^{have made it clear}
 The Government ~~has always said~~, since the IRA abandoned its
 ceasefire a year ago, that any meeting ^{between Sinn Féin and} with Government officials was
 subject to events on the ground. The gulf, ^{however,} ~~between the~~
 IRA's actions on the ground and ^{made out} your words cannot permit any meeting
 with officials at present. ~~But if it appeared a genuine IRA~~
~~ceasefire were attainable, and this was reflected in events on the~~
 ground, ~~then the Government would consider whether a meeting for the~~
 purpose of explaining any practical issues which arose would be
 helpful.

That might create a new situation.