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**NORTHERN IRELAND TALKS:
STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER**

I welcome agreement that the talks should be rapidly resumed after the General Election and the local elections in Northern Ireland. The talks are the best means available to achieve the comprehensive political settlement so desperately needed. I hope that when they resume, all the parties will be ready to make rapid progress on the substantive political issues. I will do all I can to make this possible.

Meanwhile I call on the IRA again to abandon their futile violence and renew their ceasefire credibly and verifiably. This would enable the talks to proceed in a peaceful environment and open the opportunity for all parties to participate.