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DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

The Secretary of State has written to Sinn Fein explaining the Government's approach to the peace process and to Sinn Fein's possible involvement in the Talks.

She reaffirmed that an unequivocal restoration of the IRA ceasefire was the most pressing step needed.

She also made clear, as did the previous Government, her willingness in principle to envisage a meeting between officials and Sinn Fein to carry this forward and to establish that there are no avoidable misunderstandings about the basis for Sinn Fein's involvement in the political process.

Agreement to such a meeting will be subject to events on the ground.

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