



Northern Ireland Office

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DECOMMISSIONING COMMISSION FORMALLY ESTABLISHED

The Independent International Commission on Decommissioning was formally established today by an exchange of letters between Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon. Marjorie Mowlam MP and the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr John O'Donoghue TD.

General John de Chastelain was appointed member and Chairman of the Commission and Brigadier General Tauno Nieminen from Finland and US diplomat Donald Johnson members of the Commission.

Dr Mowlam and Mr O'Donoghue expressed their gratitude to the Canadian, Finnish and US Governments for their vital support in enabling the two Governments to fulfil their joint commitment to have the Commission in place to commence work on a full operational basis on decommissioning alongside the start of substantive negotiations.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Rt Hon Marjorie Mowlam MP, Secretary of State and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Ray Burke TD, signed an Agreement on behalf of their Governments on 26 August providing for the establishment of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning.
2. Today's exchange between the Secretary of State and the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform of letters of notification of acceptance by the two Governments of the Agreement, in accordance with Article 11 of the Agreement, brings the Commission into legal existence.
3. Among the privileges and immunities granted to the Commission, its members and staff are immunity from suit and legal process and immunity for its premises in Belfast and Dublin and for its documents.