

FULL TEXT OF ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY STATEMENT

"The Ulster Unionist Party remains totally committed to the full

implementation of the Belfast Agreement in all its aspects.

"It is our belief that the establishment of the new political institutions

and the disarmament of all paramilitary organisations will herald a new

beginning for all sections of our people - a new, peaceful, and democratic

society, free from the use or threat of force.

"The UUP recognises and accepts that it is legitimate for nationalists to

pursue their political objective of a united Ireland by consent through

exclusively peaceful and democratic methods.

"The UUP is committed to the principles of inclusivity, equality, and mutual

respect on which the institutions are to be based. It is our intention that

these principles will extend in practice to all areas of public life, and be

endorsed by society as a whole.

"The UUP sees a new opportunity for all our traditions in Northern Ireland to

enter a new era of respect and tolerance of cultural differences and

expression.

"For too long, much of the unrest in our community has been caused by a

failure to accept the differing expressions of cultural identity.

"Disagreements over language issues, parades and other events must be

resolved if the stability and tolerance we all want to see are to be realised.

"These issues, in future, will be the means to promote mutual respect and

tolerance rather than division and alienation. The UUP is committed to securing

equality and mutual respect for all elements of our diverse culture.

"The Agreement will help bring this about by providing a framework for a new

political dispensation which recognises the full and equal legitimacy of our

different identities and aspirations.

"We now have a chance to create a genuine partnership between unionists and nationalists in a novel form of government. It offers us the opportunity to put past failures behind us.

"This new government has the task of rebuilding our damaged economy and the social fabric of our community. It must also strive to eliminate the causes of disadvantage and promote greater prosperity for all.

"Only when violence has no part to play and where only democratic politics will be used to further community goals will we have a fully matured as a society. We look forward with confidence to meeting this challenge.

"Both of our traditions have suffered as a result of our conflict and division. This is a matter of deep regret and makes it all the more important that we now put the past behind us. The establishment of inclusive political institutions and the commencement of the process of decommissioning are the first steps in this process.

"If, in our view, a genuine and meaningful response is forthcoming to Monday's statement from the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, the way will then be clear for the establishment of the political institutions envisaged in the Belfast Agreement. "Unionist, loyalist, nationalist, and republican must take these steps together to secure a new era of co-operation, reconciliation and mutual respect."
end

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