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# FORUM FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

THIRTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING,  
DUBLIN CASTLE ON FRIDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 1995

Chairperson: Judge Catherine McGuinness

I hereby certify the following to be a true and accurate transcript of my shorthand notes of the above-named proceedings.

*Joseph F. Ryan*  
*Maria M. O'Leary*  
Doyle Court Reporters,  
2 Arran Quay,  
Dublin 7.

Telephone: 8722833  
2862097 (after hours)  
Fax: 8724486

MR. CLOSE: Madam Chair, I have found this morning very, very challenging. In a way it challenges each of our humanities; it challenges our Christianity; it challenges our very being. The situation in which we find ourselves is to a large degree is that we are all victims. We are all victims to a greater or a lesser degree. And at this particular juncture I would like to make it absolutely plain, straightforward, no if's, no but's, but the Alliance Party condemns all violence from whatever quarter. Because violence is totally and absolutely wrong. Violence does nothing but to leave a legacy of hatred, a legacy of bitterness which unless we resolve to change those things, it will be left to future generations to yet again, to pick up the pieces. But you know, Madam Chair, in a way condemnation, condemnation is

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a bit of a cop-out. It's very, very easy to condemn and we have seen it here this morning, we have listened to it this morning. The 'Ah but-ery', the 'What about-ery', 'were we prepared to condemn one act of violence but then go on to qualify it by saying 'yes, but it was justified because of another act of violence'. That in a way is a very sad reflection on our society. But it does pose the real challenge and I think the challenge that is facing each and every one of us in society, is the challenge of forgiveness. How do we forgive? What are we as individuals prepared to forgive? And I think that must be my question to the individual and panel members. How are you addressing the challenge of forgiveness?

Thank you.