

Alliance

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" P R E S S R E L E A S E "

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ALDERDICE SAYS PAISLEY'S COMMENTS MOST UNHELPFUL

Commenting on today's statement by Ian Paisley, Alliance Leader, Dr John Alderdice described it as "most unhelpful"

Dr Alderdice said:

"This is a very sensitive time in the run up to the most important election for many years for the people of Northern Ireland.

"It is not acceptable for Ian Paisley to start to impose his conditions on the way that talks will be handled.

"The Forum has a very important role to play. It will be a means for promoting dialogue and involving everyone in Northern Ireland. It will complement the Inter-Party Negotiations taking place at the same time.

"Some weeks ago the Government made it clear that the negotiating teams will meet on 10 June. It is unrealistic to demand that the Forum should meet before that date, given the limited time between the elections on 30 May and the start of negotiations on 10 June.

"Dr Paisley's demands are most unhelpful. He should accept that both the Forum and the Negotiating Body are important and not seek to impose his own agenda.

"The politics of boycott are the politics of failure. Dr Paisley's threats are a cynical and negative ploy. I hope that those who want a negotiated settlement will see them as such and reject his tactics."