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**UNITED IRELAND**

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# Unity Referendums & the Good Friday Agreement

## A letter from Ireland

a Chara,

I have been party to several public and private discussions over the past two weeks on the future of Ireland. They have been engaging, challenging, and respectful.

There are parts of the Good Friday Agreement that I agreed with and others that I would have changed. On the whole, I supported it. But whether I liked it or not is inconsequential in the grand scheme of things. Irish republicanism is founded on the democratic right of the people of Ireland to define their constitutional future.

In 1998, in the North of Ireland, 71% endorsed the agreement, and 94% in the South. By any measure, the Good Friday Agreement is the constitutional will of the people of Ireland. It provides the framework for future constitutional change. To not agree with all the provisions of the Agreement is a fair comment; to oppose the Agreement in its entirety is to be fundamentally anti-democratic. That holds for both anti-agreement British Unionists and Irish Republicans.

The Good Friday Agreement obliges the British Government to recognize and legislate for Irish Unity if that is the wish of the people in referendums. Some argue that the British would not honor this provision and remain in opposition to the majorities north and south. That scenario, while possible, is highly unlikely. To refuse to do so would undermine 100 years of the British government's own policy, the democratic vote of the people north and south, and would be unsustainable

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Confusion also arises as to when and how referendums would be called. The Agreement is clear that both Governments can call referendums in their respective jurisdictions at **ANY** time. In fact, the former leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, David Trimble, who was part of the Agreement negotiations, called for the holding of a referendum in 2002 to coincide with the Assembly election.

A second provision on the referendum is that a British Secretary of State **MUST** call a referendum “*if at any time it appears likely to him that a majority of those voting would express a wish that Northern Ireland should cease to be part of the United Kingdom and form part of a united Ireland.*” This is not the criterion that has to be met before a referendum, but the criterion for which one can no longer be refused. The political reality is that a British Prime Minister would make the call in consultation with the Irish Government.

The third and final provision is that a further referendum **CANNOT** be held within seven years of the previous one.

The agreement provides that referendums could be called tomorrow, or next year, or sometime in the future.

The only obstacle to implementing the right to referendums is the opposition of the current Irish and British Governments. They are denying democracy. It is time to build the conversation on the future, to implement the right to referendums, and let the people decide.

I hope that clears up some confusion.

Have a great weekend.

Is mise,

Ciarán

**Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America**

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*Do you have any questions about the Good Friday Agreement? Is there something you'd like to know more about? Ask us at [admin@friendsofsinnfein.com](mailto:admin@friendsofsinnfein.com). We may answer your question in a future edition of the newsletter.*

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## Non-Unity Education Webinar Series

# Begins August 30

Join us on Saturday, August 30 for a conversation with Glenn Bradley. Glenn is a business man of more than 30 years, the former Chair of the Northern Ireland Business and Human Rights Forum, a leader in ethical transparency in global supply chains, a former British soldier, and Ulster Unionist party officer.

He will share his own personal story from growing up in a Unionist community to his involvement in the negotiations of the Good Friday Agreement, and his hopes for the future around the need for true reconciliation and to address Unionist fears. He is among a growing number of unionists who are now receptive to the idea of constitutional change.

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**September 13, 2025**

**Date:** September 13, 2025 @ 9:30 am

**Location:** Irish Hunger Memorial

**Address:** North End Ave &, Vesey St,  
New York, NY 10280



**Check our website:**

<https://martinmcguinnesspf.org/>



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## New Irish Unity People's Assemblies for the Diaspora Coast to Coast

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Francisco, CA, Hartford, CT, Boston, MA, and Philadelphia, PA in September and October.

This is a historic moment in the history of Ireland, and we want you to you join us as we hear from John Finucane MP or Mairéad Farrell TD, and dive into the work of planning and preparing for the creation of a new and united Ireland!

Join us for a conversation with special guest speakers, Irish diaspora, descendants of Ireland, and all those who support Irish unity.

Click the image of the event you want to attend below to register.

<b>THE COMMISSION</b>	<b>THE COMMISSION</b>
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 <p><b>Thursday, September 18, 2025</b>  <b>San Francisco, CA</b>          United Irish Cultural Center          7:00 - 9:30pm</p> <p><b>Featuring John Finucane, MP</b>          A conversation with the diaspora, the descendants of Ireland, and all those who support Irish unity.</p>	 <p><b>Saturday, October 25, 2025</b>  <b>Hartford, CT</b>          Irish American Home Society          2:00 - 4:30pm</p> <p><b>Featuring Mairéad Farrell TD</b>          A conversation with the diaspora, the descendants of Ireland, and all those who support Irish unity.</p>
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## ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND



**Tuesday, October 28, 2025**

**Boston, MA**

Florian Hall

7:00 - 9:30pm

### Featuring Mairéad Farrell TD

A conversation with the diaspora, the descendants of Ireland, and all those who support Irish unity.



AN COIMISIÚN  
UM THODHCHAÍ  
NA hÉIREANN

## ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND



**Thursday, October 30, 2025**

**Philadelphia, PA**

The Irish Center

6:00 - 8:30pm

### Featuring Mairéad Farrell TD

A conversation with the diaspora, the descendants of Ireland, and all those who support Irish unity.



AN COIMISIÚN  
UM THODHCHAÍ  
NA hÉIREANN

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## New Issue of Éire Nua

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# SINN FéIN PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

*By Declan Kearney*

**S**inn Féin is constantly calling on the Irish Government to begin the process of planning for constitutional change. The provision for a referendum on Irish unity is codified within the Good Friday Agreement (GFA). It makes common sense that preparatory arrangements should be made to plan for it. We all have to plan in our personal lives, with our families and in our communities – governments do it every day.

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