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UNITED STATES
UNITED IRELAND

Looking to the Past & Future

A letter from Ireland

a Chara,

I have two important pieces of work on my desk: the British Government's new legislation on the legacy of the conflict, and the itinerary for our upcoming trip to New England and Philadelphia. It is a case of looking at the past and to the future.

The "Northern Ireland Troubles Bill" has been introduced by Hilary Benn MP, the British Labour Party Secretary of State, following an agreement with the Irish Government. The Bill as printed stretches to over 116 pages and cross-references other legislation, and will take some time to fully analyse. It must be tested against the needs of victims and survivors and be consistent with international law and agreements, including the European Convention on Human Rights.

This new Bill can be amended at various stages in parliament. It is only at the end of this process that a full analysis can be made. When they were in opposition, the Labour Party committed to "repeal and replace" the previous government's law, which provided a de facto amnesty for British State Forces, ended the right to inquests and access to the courts for victims and suspended effective investigation into past killings.

One provision has already raised concerns. The former Sinn Féin President, Gerry Adams, is initiating a legal challenge to the Bill's proposal to retroactively change the law. Gerry Adams was interned without trial for a number of years in the 1970s. The British Supreme Court found that his detention was illegal as it had not been approved by the then British Secretary of State. It is thought that this judgment would impact around 400 former prisoners who were illegally interned.

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Dealing effectively with the past, providing information, truth, and justice, is key to acknowledgement and reconciliation. The past impacts families left bereaved and searching for answers. The denials and cover-ups mean the past cannot be resolved.

That is why the British Government must deal with this issue in an open and transparent fashion that is consistent with the rights of victims. Reconciliation is more important than the reputation of past British Governments and their military.

While I am working my way through these new proposals on the past, I have the immediate issue of preparing for the next round of Irish Unity People's Assemblies with Mairead Farrell TD in Hartford, Boston, and Philadelphia. As well as a stop in New Bedford to mark the 150th Anniversary of the sailing of the Catalpa.

We have now completed Unity Commission hearings in Columbus (Ohio), Cleveland, Chicago, Pearl River (New York), Nashville, San Francisco, Washington, DC, and Cincinnati. As well as Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver.

Common across all commission hearings is a thirst for knowledge and enthusiasm to promote unity. Each city has its own character and brings something new to the table. The Commissions are an opportunity for supporters of Irish Unity to feed their views back to Sinn Féin in Ireland, to learn of the pathway to unity, and to identify their role in building a new and united Ireland.

They are wonderful to witness and partake in. I hope you can attend the upcoming events and look forward to seeing you along the road.

Have a great weekend.

Ciarán

Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America

Irish Unity People's Assemblies in Hartford, Boston, & Philadelphia in October with Mairéad Farrell TD

Irish Unity People's Assemblies for the Diaspora will be in New England in late October.

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[Click here to register for Boston, MA](#)

[Click here to register for Philadelphia, PA](#)

This is a historic moment in the history of Ireland, and we want you to you join us as we hear from 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.

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ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND



Oct 25 - Hartford, CT

Oct 28 - Boston, MA

Oct 30 - Philadelphia, PA

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

AN COIMISIÚN
UM THODHCHAÍ
NA hÉIREANN



Featuring Mairéad Farrell TD

Sinn Féin raises concerns with British Secretary of State Hilary Benn over legacy legislation – Finucane

A Sinn Féin delegation, led by John Finucane MP, met Thursday with British Secretary of State Hilary Benn to discuss the legacy framework.

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serious concerns with Hilary Benn following the publication of legislation in the British House of Commons yesterday.

“With the publication of this legislation, the real work now is to scrutinise the detail and ensure it can command the confidence of victims and families,” said Mr Finucane.

“At today’s meeting we pressed the British Secretary of State on our initial concerns. The inclusion of a clause to change the law and block compensation for former internees is an act of bad faith and political cynicism. That approach was ruled unlawful in 2020, yet the British government now proposes to circumvent both that ruling and existing legislation.

“We are equally alarmed by the proposed ‘national security’ veto, which would place the release of information to families at the discretion of a British Secretary of State. The current Secretary of State is already challenging a coroner’s right to provide a gist in the Supreme Court; if that is his stance now, what will it be with a statutory veto?

“We also made clear that the public commentary around protections for former British combatants is being watched closely. There can be no side deals for veterans. Everyone must be equal before the law.

“On inquests, the bar for re-establishment appears so high that few will be reopened, with cases instead pushed into the new Legacy Commission. That is despite inquests being a tried and tested route to establishing truth.

“The family of Sean Brown are still without answers 29 years after his murder. That is a shameful indictment of British justice, and this agreement makes no reference to it. A public inquiry should be established without delay, as recommended by five High Court judges, and the British government should end its legal challenges against Bridie Brown and her family.

“There is also a lack of clarity around the resourcing and implementation of these legacy mechanisms. We have asked for concrete detail to be provided.

“As it stands, this process appears designed to protect the interests of the British state rather than deliver for families.

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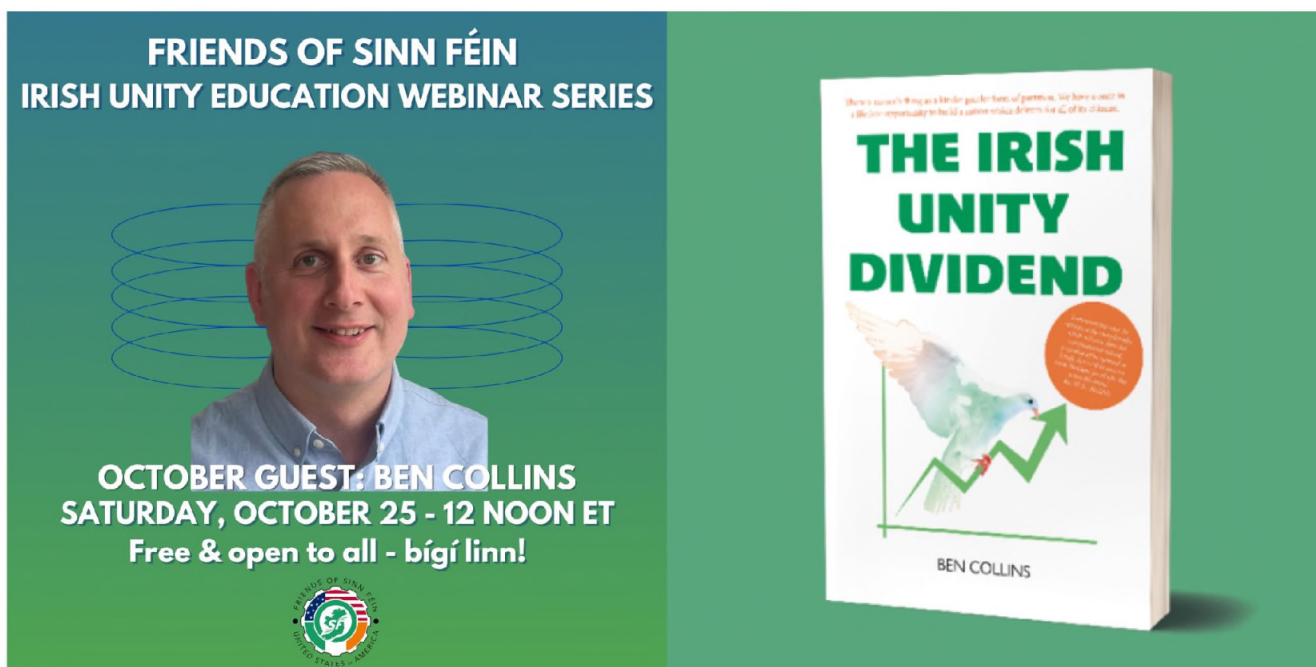
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and keep — their confidence.”

Irish Unity Education Webinar Series

October Guest: Ben Collins

Join us on **Saturday, October 25** at 12:00 noon ET for the third in our Irish Unity Educational Webinar Series. We will be joined by **Ben Collins**, author of the new book, [The Irish Unity Dividend](#). This event is free and all are welcome! [Register here](#).



The graphic is a promotional banner for a webinar. It is split into two main sections. The left section has a dark teal background and features a portrait of Ben Collins, a man with short grey hair wearing a light blue button-down shirt. Above the portrait, the text reads "FRIENDS OF SINN FÉIN" and "IRISH UNITY EDUCATION WEBINAR SERIES". Below the portrait, it says "OCTOBER GUEST: BEN COLLINS", "SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 - 12 NOON ET", and "Free & open to all - bigí linn!". At the bottom left of this section is a circular logo for "FRIENDS OF SINN FÉIN" with "UNITED STATES AMERICA" written around it. The right section has a green background and features a 3D rendering of the book "THE IRISH UNITY DIVIDEND" by Ben Collins. The book cover is white with green text and a green line graph with an upward-pointing arrow. A white dove is flying above the graph. A small orange circle on the cover contains a quote.

Adams comment on Internment Case

Former Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams has accused the British government of “hypocrisy and duplicity over its decision to retrospectively change a law which a Conservative government broke over 50 years ago, while introducing a new law to protect its own armed forces from the legal consequences of their criminal actions.”

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Custody Orders not authorised and approved by the Secretary of State were illegal. It is believed that upwards of 400 other internees are similarly affected.

“The British government, which knew it was in the wrong at that time, knowingly broke its own law.

“In January Keir Starmer made it clear that he would look at ‘every conceivable way’ to ensure that I and others impacted by this did not receive compensation.

“Today, at the stroke of a pen what was illegal five decades ago has been made legal as the British state changes the rules to suit its own agenda and protect its own military personnel.

“That an Irish government would collude in this is disgraceful.

“The British military was involved in the Dublin-Monaghan bombings. A Committee of the Oireachtas on Justice concluded in 2005 that: ‘We are dealing with acts of international terrorism that were colluded in by the British security forces’.

“The Irish government has now signed up to new laws that will protect those British soldiers involved in these and other attacks in the South and in the North.

“The British want to close the door on their past actions. Like many others I will be speaking to my legal team in the next few days to examine what options here and within Europe are open to us.”

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Watch Irish Unity Education Webinar with Professor Colin Harvey

Did you see our conversation with Professor Colin Harvey about how to best prepare for a new and United Ireland? You can watch it and find links to resources and ways to learn more right here:

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Catalpa Anniversary Event in New Bedford, MA - October 27, 2025


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CATALPA 150TH ANNIVERSARY






THE GREATEST ESCAPE IN IRISH HISTORY

7:00 PM
MONDAY - OCTOBER 27TH
SEAMEN'S BETHEL NEW BEDFORD


CELEBRATING




ANNIVERSARY


NEW BEDFORD CONNECTION

The Catalpa rescue refers to a famous mission where the American whaling ship Catalpa, sailing out of New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1875, rescued six Irish Fenian prisoners from Fremantle Prison in Western Australia in 1876. The mission was a culmination of secret planning by Irish exiles in America and was led by Captain George Anthony, a New Bedford native. The daring escape was a major propaganda victory for the Fenians, ultimately securing the freedom of the six men and symbolizing the fight for Irish independence.





Sinn Fein TD Mairead Farrell
Represents Galway West and South Mayo, and serves as the party's spokesperson on Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform, and Digitalisation.



Marcus Howard
The Independent Historian and Filmmaker
"The Greatest Escape in Irish History: Voices From The Tomb" Catalpa Rescue - 150th Anniversary Talk

Sponsored by The Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick New Bedford

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