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**UNITED IRELAND**

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## The Cost of Partition

### A letter from Ireland

a Chara,

The Executive and Assembly in the North face and ongoing issue of drafting their budget. In any government, there is a normal tension between tax and spend in sovereign parliaments. In the North of Ireland, the Assembly is not a fully sovereign parliament. It is a devolved administration of Westminster. It is the government in London which sets the tax and benefit rates, collects the revenue, and allocates a budget to the North.

The North has only control over a local property tax and can introduce new and novel taxes, such as a plastic bag tax. The revenues from all other taxes, such as corporation and employment taxes, go straight to London.

The British Government have never fully opened the books on the tax take in the North. Many of the large employers and businesses are headquartered and pay their taxes in Britain. We do know that the North operates a deficit; however, there is a debate amongst economists on the scale of it, with estimates ranging from €1.75 billion to €10 billion. All of this argues for greater transparency from the British.

Underlying this discussion, is the economic cost of partition.

When Ireland was partitioned, the six North-East counties that stayed under British control were the economic drivers of Ireland with strong industrial, agricultural and financial sectors. Belfast was a bigger city than Dublin. At the time of partition, the six counties paid more into the British exchequer (Treasury) than they received. The North was operating with a significant surplus.

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Ministers promoted economic investments in their constituencies in Britain. They got no votes for them in the north.

Traders were cut off from their immediate markets in the rest of Ireland. Unionist ministers, who supported partition, got comfortable drawing a cheque from London and looked after their own while the economy flatlined. There was no incentive to grow the economy, as any additional tax raised went to London. We are now at the absurd point that one unionist claim against Unity is that the rest of the island cannot afford to maintain the North!

Partition has done real and lasting damage to the economy in North, across the border counties, and throughout the Island. It has disrupted infrastructure investments, workforce planning, and skills development. While partition remains, the North and the rest of the Island cannot meet its economic potential. The loss of opportunity costs mounts with every year of partition.

There will be front-end costs in the work of creating a new and united Ireland, but over the lifetime of a nation, these are minimal. Economists may speculate on costs, but none have ever made an economic case for continued partition.

Britain still controls the purse strings, and public services are being undermined. The economy in the North fails well below that of the South in all indicators. The economic cost of partition has been great and is still being paid.

Have a great weekend.

Ciarán

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

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## **Watch: Webinar with Ireland's Future Co-founder Niall Murphy**

Our latest guest on the Irish Unity Education Webinar was Niall Murphy, Secretary and Co-founder of Ireland's Future and human right's lawyer.

We discuss the grassroots origins of Ireland's Future, the historic nature of this moment in history, ways to learn more about how to best prepare for a new and

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## **“We will not acquiesce in any legacy process that disregards victims’ rights.” John Finucane MP**

Sinn Féin MP John Finucane addressed a commemoration in memory of six men murdered by the British Army in 1973.

The New Lodge Six; Jim McCann, Jim Sloan, Tony Campbell, Brendan Maguire, John Loughran and Ambrose Hardy, were unarmed when they were fatally shot.

“Fifty-three years on, the days of the 3rd and 4th of February remain imprinted on the psyche and fabric of the New Lodge community,” said the North Belfast MP.

“Six men, unarmed and innocent, were brutally murdered by British gunfire as they tried in vain to save each other.

“Their memory lives on through their families who have shamefully been denied justice and accountability for decades, despite their brave and dignified campaign.

“I again call on Hilary Benn to do what the New Lodge Six families have been asking for decades and grant them

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controlled by the British government, would be wholly unacceptable.

“If the British government is serious about dealing with the past, it cannot be on its own partisan terms. It must be centred on families and be fully compliant with human rights.

“Sinn Féin will continue to stand with families seeking truth and justice, and against any legacy process that puts British state forces above the rights of victims.”

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## Busting United Ireland Myths

As you're making your plans for St. Patrick's Day events, why not print these out and share them with your friends, colleagues, and any dignitaries speaking at your parade and celebrations? Everyone will be excited about being seen to be green - let's make sure they know that it's time for unity!

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# BUSTING THE UNITED IRELAND MYTHS

**Irish Unity is the future.**

A United Ireland – a new and shared Ireland – will unlock the full potential of our island people and provide the basis on which a stronger and fairer society can be built.

Ending partition and the Westminster control of part of our island is central to building a modern, inclusive, fair society, and a country, within the EU, which can play its full part in the world.



**Sinn Féin**

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For more info on our Abu Canvass Aid visit [sinnfein.ie/privacy-abu](http://sinnfein.ie/privacy-abu)

[www.sinnfein.ie/irish-unity](http://www.sinnfein.ie/irish-unity)



However some myths about Irish Unity remain – **let's deal with them....**

**MYTH**  
**THE SOUTH CAN'T AFFORD THE NORTH**

**FALSE**

Academic research shows how reunification could provide a major boost to the all island economy. The southern economy, while in need of reform, is consistently ranked highly on global performance indexes. However, border counties and the west of Ireland are disadvantaged by partition and Dublin government policy. Reunification would unlock the full potential of our island economy.

**MYTH**  
**I'D HAVE TO PAY FOR HEALTHCARE**

**FALSE**

Reunification paves the way towards a universal, free at the point of delivery healthcare system for the whole island. Sinn Féin is committed to a single all-island healthcare system. This is the most sensible way to plan and deliver healthcare to the whole population of Ireland.

**MYTH**  
**MY STANDARD OF LIVING WILL DECREASE**

**FALSE**

Irish Unity will not threaten anyone's standard of living, it will boost the island economy meaning that more people will be working and contributing. That means more money is available for public services.

**MYTH**  
**THE NORTH HAS A BETTER EDUCATION SYSTEM**

**FALSE**

Educational outcomes in the north compare poorly with the south and many areas of Britain. Irish unity will enable the redesign of the education system across the island so that all children fulfil their potential.

**MYTH**  
**I WON'T HAVE ACCESS TO THE SAME BENEFITS**

**FALSE**

Social Protection and Pension payments in the south are significantly more generous than the north. The British government's policy of cuts is unfair and people in the north of Ireland should not have to live under Tory austerity.

**MYTH**  
**BRITAIN PAYS A €9BILLION SUBVENTION TO THE NORTH**

**FALSE**

British spending on military, servicing huge debt and overseas interests should not be shouldered by anybody in Ireland. When this spending is removed, and pension obligations are met, the true subvention value could be as low as £2.5 billion. However the subvention is only necessary because the economy of the north is held back by partition. The economic dividend brought by unity would make the subvention unnecessary.

**MYTH**  
**A UNITED IRELAND WILL NOT ACCOMMODATE PROTESTANT, UNIONIST AND BRITISH IDENTITY**

**FALSE**

The Good Friday Agreement provides protections for identity. The Good Friday Agreement will also protect identity in the new united Ireland. Furthermore, people of all traditions will be protected in law. The new Ireland provides an unparalleled opportunity to end divisions. Sinn Féin envisages a future based on equality and the unity of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter.



[www.sinnfein.ie/irish-unity](http://www.sinnfein.ie/irish-unity)

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~~Civil trial hearsay evidence part of a~~

## familiar agenda - Gerry Adams

In May 2022 a civil case was launched against me in England. The civil trial will begin on March 9 in London and conclude on St Patrick's Day.

There are some aspects of the case I can comment on and others I cannot at this time. Suffice to say that this is an unorthodox claim against me about events which occurred 29 and 53 years ago. In short, three claimants seek to hold me personally liable for three bombings committed by the IRA in March 1973 (at the Old Bailey), in February 1996 (at London Docklands) and in June 1996 (at the Manchester Arndale Shopping Centre).

Many innocent people were seriously hurt and three were killed in the bombings. The claimants were injured and have suffered as a result. They deserve nothing but sympathy for what they have gone through. So do all those who were killed or injured in the conflict. And their families.

I regret all the deaths and injuries.

People are entitled to use the law. However, this case is brought decades after these incidents and decades after the Good Friday Agreement brought peace to us all. I anticipate, from public statements made by the claimants' solicitors, that a number of former British army and RUC/PSNI witnesses will give hearsay evidence that because I was a senior republican during the conflict I must be responsible for these specific events.

I had no direct or indirect involvement in these explosions and I will robustly challenge the unsubstantiated hearsay statements that are the mainstay of the claimants' case, which is for symbolic damages of £1.

I am honoured to have served the republican struggle as Uachtarán Shinn Féin for almost thirty-five years. In that time, we created a peace strategy, and with others a way out of conflict which led to the Good Friday Agreement. We supported and assisted the search for peace in other parts of the world.

At the same time successive generations of activists and increasing numbers of voters have built Sinn Féin into the largest political party on the island of Ireland.

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personally. Recently the British PM Keir Starmer, in defending the unlawful internment of hundreds of innocent prisoners without trial in the 1970s, pledged to deny me (and thereby other victims of unlawful internment) the right to redress in what amounts to an official campaign of demonisation. Others in the military establishment see republicans as the enemy they failed to defeat. Recent comments by the British Secretary of State Hilary Benn MP on this case underpin this view.

This civil action has support from British forces veterans, from English Tories, the DUP, other unionist parties and elements of the loyal orders.

I wish to thank those who have pledged their support to my defence.

Míle buíochas.

In my view it is no coincidence that this case is set against a febrile political atmosphere where British army veterans and other personnel are doing everything they can to prevent scrutiny of their past actions in Ireland and potential prosecutions for the murder of innocent civilians and even their own agents, as revealed in successive reports by John Stevens, Judge Peter Cory, Desmond de Silva, many Police Ombudsman reports, inquests and last month's Kenova Report.

I wholeheartedly share the claimants stated objectives to "establish the truth" and "an effective truth and reconciliation process".

Over many years I have sought, in national and international meetings and negotiations, the establishment of a truth and reconciliation process that would allow all victims of the conflict to achieve truth and accountability. I was among those who successfully negotiated the Stormont House Agreement in 2014, agreed by all of the parties and two governments, which was intended to address this issue.

Mechanisms to deal with the legacy of the past have been agreed, then reneged upon, then subverted by successive British governments, including agreements with the Irish government.

I remain committed to the establishment of a truth and reconciliation process in which all victims of the conflict can achieve truth and hopefully some measure of closure for the hurt they have suffered.

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republicans for the conflict while diverting attention from their role, policies, repression, repeated law breaking and interference in Irish affairs.

I offer no criticism of the claimants, but those people who support this case from the shadows are wedded to the past and unable to accept the new reality of our island moving towards self-determination and unity.

*This piece first appeared in Andersontown News. You can [read the original here](#).*

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