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**UNITED STATES**  
**UNITED IRELAND**

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## Slán Rev. Jessie Jackson

### **A letter from Ireland**

a Chara,

This week, we lost the Rev. Jessie Jackson. I had the privilege to hear him speak in Belfast many years ago. He spoke of hope, reconciliation, and the future.

I can't remember the details of what he said, but I remember how he said it. The rhythm and cadence of his voice as it rose and fell, quickened and slowed. It was not like anyone I had heard before. It was gospel, spiritual, musical, and far removed from the sermons at mass I had heard growing up.

A shared sense of connection came alive in his words. His accent unfamiliar, his words of struggle are too familiar.

I felt that connection again when I visited the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis—the site of the shooting of Dr King. Rev. Jackson was at his side that day. It is now the National Civil Rights Museum. I was stopped in my tracks by the sound of singing. A chorus of "We shall overcome". It was a recording, not of a choir in a concert hall, but of protestors on a street. It could have been Selma or Derry. The US civil rights movement inspired the Irish civil rights movement. Injustice respects no boundaries, and hope can transcend borders.

Rev. Jackson remained a friend of Ireland and of Sinn Féin when our party was marginalised and censored. He supported calls for Irish unity in the 1980's. As the peace process developed, he and other African American leaders, such as Rep. John Lewis and Rep. Donald Payne, stood on the side of human and civil rights.

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recognised that peace and reconciliation required a new beginning in policing.

I remember sitting on a green outside the community centre in Portatown as we protested the imposition of an Orange march along the Garvaghy Road. Rep Payne sat across from us. He had travelled as an international observer to monitor the policing response. He placed himself on the frontline, recognising that sectarianism was just another version of racism.

Rev. Jackson has left many friends in Ireland. Those who knew him always spoke of his good humour, his laugh, and his wide embrace. He returned to Ireland and to Derry in 2017 to open the Museum of Free Derry. A history of a risen people, inspired by leaders on the other side of the Atlantic, bound together in a fight against injustice, discrimination, and inequality.

In 2020, Rev. Jackson said, "We're not going backwards; we're not going to give up. It's a healing time, it's hope time. I stand with the people of Ireland and Irish Americans and Irish in Ireland."

I'm not religious, but I'd say amen to that and thank you, Rev. Jackson.

Have a great weekend.

Ciarán

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

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## **Micheál Martin's complacency on Irish Unity is a failure of leadership**

Sinn Féin Leader Mary Lou McDonald TD has described comments on Irish unity by Taoiseach Micheál Martin during an interview on 7 Lá as dismissive, complacent and completely out of step with political reality across the island.

Mary Lou McDonald said, "The Taoiseach's claim that there is 'not much substance' behind the growing demand for a referendum on Irish unity is both wrong and revealing. It shows a government that is content to drift, rather than lead, on the most important constitutional question facing our country.

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who want better public services, economic opportunity, political stability and a future free from division.

“The responsibility to prepare for constitutional change rests squarely with the Irish Government. On that front, this government has failed.”

Mary Lou McDonald said that while practical cross-border projects are welcome, they cannot substitute for political leadership.

“Connections between communities matter. Reconciliation matters. Sinn Féin has consistently championed dialogue, respect and partnership. But building a bridge at Narrow Water, while positive, is not a strategy for constitutional change. Cultural exchanges and poetry readings are no substitute for serious preparation.

“The Shared Island initiative, while useful in parts, is not a plan for unity. It does not address the core questions of healthcare, taxation, public services, rights protections or economic transition in a new Ireland. These are the issues that require detailed, structured planning now – not in some vague future beyond 2030.”

Mary Lou said the Taoiseach’s assertion that there is “no prospect” of a referendum before 2030 ignores demographic and political change.

“Public opinion is shifting. The conversation is advancing. Citizens’ assemblies, independent research, and cross-community dialogue are all pointing to the need for structured preparation. Pretending that change is not happening will not stop it.

“The Good Friday Agreement provides a clear democratic pathway. It is not for any Taoiseach to dismiss that pathway because it is politically inconvenient.”

Addressing the Taoiseach’s suggestion that unity talk is premature, she added, “Leadership means preparing for the future, not postponing it. The role of the Irish Government should be to plan, to inform, and to engage people honestly about what unity would look like – socially, economically and politically.

“Sinn Féin will continue to work constructively with all communities on this island. Irish unity must be achieved by consent, through peaceful and democratic means, with protections and guarantees for all traditions.

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“This is a defining decade. The government can either lead responsibly and prepare for constitutional change, or it can continue to pretend that the conversation is not already well underway. Sinn Féin will not wait for complacency to catch up with reality.”

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## **Irish Unity Education Webinar February**

### **Guest: Rev. Karen Sethuraman**

Our February guest for Irish Unity Education Webinar Series is Karen Sethuraman, The first female Baptist Minister on the island of Ireland, she also serves on the board of Ireland's Future. Register now & join us on Saturday, February 28 at 12:00 noon ET. [Click the image below to register!](#)

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## FRIENDS OF SINN FEIN IRISH UNITY EDUCATION WEBINAR SERIES



**FEBRUARY GUEST:  
REV. KAREN SETHURAMAN  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28 - 12 NOON ET**



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## **Gerry Adams expresses “deep sense of loss” on the death of US Civil Rights Leader Rev. Jesse Jackson**

Former Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams has expressed his “deep sense of loss” on the death of US Civil Rights Leader Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Mr. Adams said, “I had the great honour and privilege of meeting Jesse Jackson many times in the USA and here in Ireland. He was a fearless and inspirational civil

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“Jesse Jackson was a remarkable and compassionate human being who believed in the essential goodness of people.

“In Irish there is a saying: *“Is ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine”* which translates as: *“We all live in each other’s shadow.”* Few people understood this better than Jesse Jackson. It was a fundamental part of who he was.

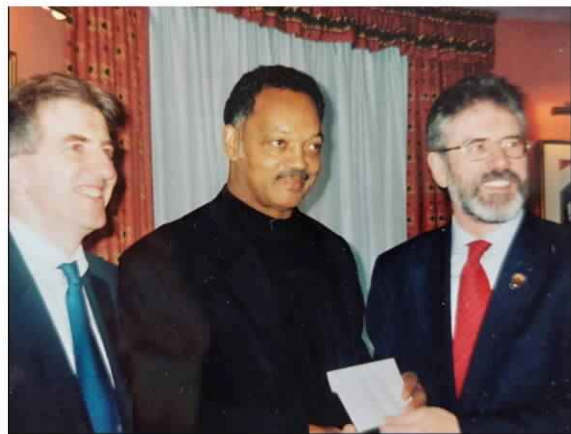
“Rev. Jackson also understood the significant influence that the Civil Rights Movement in the USA had on the Civil Rights Movement in the North in the 1960s.

“He was a staunch supporter of the Irish peace process and a defender of the Good Friday Agreement. In 2017 he visited Derry where he opened the newly rebuilt Museum of Free Derry along with Martin McGuinness’s wife Bernie and son Fiachra. He later visited Martin’s graveside.

“In 2020 Rev Jackson sent a video message to an Irish-American conference in New York. He said: *“We’re not going backwards; we’re not going to give up. It’s a healing time, it’s hope time. I stand with people of Ireland and Irish Americans and Irish in Ireland. Fred Douglass was there, and I’ve been there. I look forward to coming to Ireland again. Please let me come back. I love you guys very much.”*

“I want to extend to Jesse’s wife Jacqueline; their children – Santita, Jesse Jr., Jonathan, Yusef, Jacqueline; daughter Ashley Jackson, and grandchildren, his friends and colleagues our sincerest condolences and solidarity on this death.

“Jesse Jackson was a good friend to Ireland, an inspiring leader and he will be missed. Ar dheis dé go raibh a anam dílis.



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## 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 united Ireland, and an update on some of the legacy cases Niall is working on. It's a packed webinar full of excellent resources and analysis, not to be missed!



## 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.



[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.



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