

Liz O'Donnell TD: Dáil Speech on IRA decommissioning

29th September 2005

Dáil statements on IRA decommissioning report.

On behalf of the Progressive Democrats I acknowledge the work of the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister in bringing about, eventually, the decommissioning of weapons by the IRA.

I commend also the de Chastelain commission on its work over many years in bringing about the decommissioning. The eventual decommissioning of IRA weapons is a tribute and testament to the work not of Sinn Féin in persuasion but of those of us in the House in the democratic constitutional parties who have insisted that it is incompatible with democracy to hold on to weapons. The retention of those weapons by the IRA has been the single biggest obstacle to political progress since the Good Friday Agreement was democratically endorsed by the people on both sides of the Border.

Amidst all the eulogy and weary relief associated with the decommissioning announcement it is essential to recognise the pain and suffering and lost and devastated lives of those who were maimed and killed by these IRA weapons over the years. British and Irish people have been killed and lives devastated by these weapons. Rather than eulogise the work of Sinn Féin and those who have no conscience or tendency to apologise for these terrible acts the House should stand square and confirm its commitment to democratic politics and respectfully remember all those innocent men and women and also men and women of the armed forces who were destroyed and murdered by these weapons.