



*The untold stories of
Relatives, Victims, and Survivors*

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RFJ Welcome US Congressional Letter on Legacy

Relatives for Justice respond to U.S. Congress House of Representatives letter to the British government Ambassador in Washington DC, Sir Kim Darroch, in which they raise concerns and call on the UK representative to explain failings by his government to implement agreements made on addressing the legacy of the past in the North of Ireland. The signatories also call upon the UK to honour their legal obligations with respect to Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights by holding compliant investigations into killings. They also call for funds to enable inquests to take place and criticize any attempt to impose an amnesty for the British army, RUC and their agents by way of a statute of limitations.

Responding RFJ's Mark Thompson said:

"We welcome and endorse fully the content of the letter. Hopefully this now opens further lines of communication in which members of the U.S. Congress can monitor and assist in making progress on the implementation of legacy agreements and human rights.

"The letter reiterates precisely the concerns raised by RFJ during two recent visits to the U.S where we briefed members of Congress and urged them to intervene given the UK's failure to implement legacy agreements for victims and survivors of the conflict. This included providing evidence at a key Congressional Hearing only a few weeks ago examining these very same matters.

"In particular we thank House Representatives Joe Crowley, Chris Smith and Richie Neal the joint co-sponsors of the initiative. They listened and responded. The letter, with its direct no nonsense content, will cut through the pretense and cynical games being played out by London and the NIO as they continue to stall and prevent implementation of legacy agreements reached in December 2104.

"Families have waited far too long for accountability. Legacy, legal obligations and human rights, sit quite separately from the politics and political vacuum and must be addressed whether or not the political institutions are reestablished.

"In January of this year the AOH hosted an 'emergency visit' around legacy inviting RFJ to address a series of meetings throughout the State of New York. The backdrop to the visit was the refusal by the UK to implement agreed legacy mechanisms, their arbitrary inserting of a 'national security' veto in draft legislation re same, a proposed amnesty for UK State forces and their agents, and the persistent campaign in blocking inquests.

"We appealed to Irish America and beyond to assist – to intervene. The response was immediate and encouraging. Hopefully these combined efforts will have the desired effect of creating external political scrutiny and pressure for the implementation of agreed legacy mechanisms for all victims and survivors of the conflict."

