



## Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

Rt Hon. Chris Heaton-Harris MP  
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

**From**  
Sir Robert Buckland KBE KC MP

by email only

22 May 2024

Dear Chris,

Thank you for the Government response to my Committee's report on, The effect of paramilitary activity and organised crime on society in Northern Ireland.

My Committee considered the response at its meeting today. While we are very pleased that Northern Ireland's political institutions are back up and running, we note this does not mean that the Government can leave all matters now to the Executive. There are areas where powers overlap and on which we plan to keep a watching brief. They include NIO liaison with the Department for Work and Pensions to improve awareness of access among the NI population to universal credit.

We also note a sense in the response to downplay the issue of national security, which is front and centre within the locus of the UK Government.

And, in relation to transition, we have concerns that the NIO is going under the radar with its work on this issue, sidestepping the Assembly and failing to involve and consult the public on this very difficult topic.

These issues, and future funding for tackling paramilitarism, will form part of our ongoing review of this area. We expect to raise them, alongside other pressing matters, when you appear before us on 26 June. I am grateful to you for agreeing to do so.

I reiterate my thanks to you for the Government's timely response to our report, which does indeed help us to fulfil our duty to scrutinise Government policy on, as we described it, this malignant legacy of the Troubles.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Buckland".

**Sir Robert Buckland KBE KC MP**  
Chair, Northern Ireland Affairs Committee