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The Lord Alton  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

15 January 2025  
Our reference: MC/24/572

Dear Lord Alton,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 December 2024, expanding on the points you made in the House on 5 December 2024, concerning the Government's statement on the legacy of the Troubles.

I trust that you have received my previous letter, dated 16 December 2024, which addresses your specific questions on when we expect the Supreme Court to hear the appeal in *Dillon & Others*. Since sending that letter, the Court of Appeal has refused our application for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court, and we will now renew the application for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court directly.

Turning to your other questions, let me firstly assure you that the Government is acutely aware that families have waited far too long to find out what happened to their loved ones. We are absolutely committed to making timely progress on these matters, so that families can obtain the information, accountability, and acknowledgement that they have long sought.

That is why the Government's approach has been to retain and reform the ICIR - rather than leaving us in a position where we are considering from scratch how to support Northern Ireland society to deal with legacy issues.

As you will be aware, the Remedial Order can only be used to remedy legislation where there is no appeal against ECHR findings, which is why the Secretary of State has committed to using primary legislation to make other changes - including strengthening the ICIR.

The Government is committed to introducing this legislation when parliamentary time allows. You will appreciate that timings are dependent both on parliamentary timetabling and the important engagement process that the Department will undertake with all parties to help determine what provisions will be included in that legislation. While I cannot put a firm deadline on this engagement, the Secretary of State has been clear that this cannot be an unending process of discussion.

The *McKerr* and *Kelly & Others* cases are part of the cohort of legacy inquests that were prohibited from continuation after 1 May 2024, due to the provisions of the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023. As set out by the Secretary of State, the forthcoming legislation will implement our promise to allow inquests previously halted to proceed, should that be the preference of the families concerned.

I hope this, and my previous letter, provide you with assurance about how the Government plans to fulfill its commitments to address the legacy of the Troubles as quickly as possible. The department looks forward to engaging with Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) members in the coming months, and to sharing further details in due course.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Baroness Anderson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**BARONESS ANDERSON OF STOKE-ON-TRENT  
NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE LORDS SPOKESPERSON**