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Tonia Antoniazzi MP

Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee
House of Commons
Palace of Westminster
Westminster
SW1A 0AA

By email: northircom@parliament.uk

10 July 2025

Our reference: MC/25/396

Dear Tonia,

Thank you for your letter dated 27 June, regarding three points that Members raised at my appearance before the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on the work of the Northern Ireland Office on Monday 23 June. I shall take each of your points in turn.

Regarding the 'dedicated persons' that will deliver the 'memorialisation' initiatives under Part 4 of the Legacy Act, the legislation broadly sets out that these appointments are made by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, via a statutory instrument laid before Parliament, and following a period of consultation with relevant stakeholders. The Government is committed to retaining the Part 4 measures in the forthcoming legislation. This does mean, however, that the Part 4 provisions - including any appointments - will not be implemented until after this new legislation is in place. We will set out further details in due course.

More generally, the Government continues to work intensively to ensure that we are in a position to introduce legislation to repeal and replace the Legacy Act when parliamentary time allows. The Government is united in its objective to implement legislation that is fully human rights compliant and capable of commanding confidence across the diverse

communities affected by the Troubles. Any legislation will be discussed across government in the usual way, as set out in the Guide to Making Legislation. It is a long established precedent that information about discussions that take place in Cabinet and its committees is not normally disclosed.

On Libyan-sponsored IRA terrorism, the Committee is aware that this is an issue which falls under the responsibility of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. I understand that the issue of publication of elements of the Shawcross Report is under active consideration, with an update expected in due course. The Government will, of course, ensure that the Committee is updated in relation to these matters, including Minister Falconer's meetings with victims and survivors.

On the final point, the Government recognizes the significance of Spirit's Belfast operations to the wider aerospace sector; to Northern Ireland's economy; and to the UK's manufacturing capabilities. We will continue to facilitate discussions - and I have now written to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade on the matter of a meeting with interested parties - explore potential support measures, and seek to ensure a sustainable solution that protects jobs and investment, subject to thorough assessment and due diligence.

The Government is committed to supporting the workforce and the aerospace industry in Northern Ireland during this transition and has been holding constructive conversations with the parties on securing a prosperous and successful future for Belfast. We will take appropriate actions to safeguard the interests of Belfast skilled employees, maintain the UK's position as a global leader in aircraft wing design and manufacture and support the civil and defence ramp ups.

I hope this reply is helpful. I look forward to appearing before the Committee later this month for a further discussion on addressing the legacy of The Troubles.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Benn'.

THE RT HON HILARY BENN MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

By email only

27 June 2025

From the Chair
Tonia Antoniazzi MP

Dear Hilary,

Thank you for your evidence to my committee earlier this week on the work of your Department, the transcript for which has now been [published on our website](#). I would be grateful if you could provide us with a written response on the points below which Members raised during the meeting:

- Regarding designated persons due to carry out the memorialisation activities under Part 4 of the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023, please clarify the planned appointment process for this and whether you intend to make any amendments to this part of the Act in upcoming primary legislation (Q108)? More generally, what concerns if any have been raised with you by other government departments on your plans to repeal and replace the 2023 Act (Q88)?
- In response to Simon Hoare's question (Q112) on compensation for Libyan sponsored IRA terrorism, you said the Government is considering whether elements of the 2020 Shawcross report might be published. Can you provide an update on when a decision on this can be expected? In addition, could you please update the committee on your discussions with FCDO Minister Falconer following his meeting with victims-survivors next month?
- Following Gavin Robinson's letter to the Business Secretary, can you confirm whether the Minister intends to convene a meeting of the interested parties to the Spirit AeroSystems sale, to encourage a positive outcome for the future of the site? Otherwise, will you commit to convening such a meeting (Q131)?

Yours ever,

Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee