

Statement on the introduction of the Northern Ireland Legacy Bill

News story

The Ministry of Defence's statement on the Northern Ireland Legacy Bill.



We are pleased to announce that yesterday, the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill was introduced to the House of Commons. This Bill, brought forward by the Northern Ireland Office, is a Government pledge to address the extremely complex and sensitive legacy of Northern Ireland's past, helping society look to the future, not the past.

It delivers on our commitments to those who served in Northern Ireland, whilst implementing a process that provides answers for families. For too long, veterans and former service personnel have lived in fear of prosecution for actions taken whilst serving their country in order to uphold the rule of law. We are pleased that the Bill not only gives veterans the protections they deserve, but provides better outcomes for victims, survivors and their families. Key is the establishment of a new Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery, that will allow individuals and communities affected by the Troubles to seek and receive information about Troubles-related deaths and serious injuries.

Following publication of the Command Paper in July 2019 we have listened to what people have said about keeping open the prospect of criminal justice outcomes, and we have adjusted our approach to remove any automatic access to immunity for those involved in Troubles-related incidents. Instead, the independent body will grant immunity based on an individual's cooperation with the body's enquiries. This approach gives our veterans the certainty that they deserve but leaves open the route of prosecution if individuals are not deemed to have earned their immunity. For those who do not come forward, the possibility of prosecution will remain.

We are confident that this legislation will deliver for those most impacted by the Troubles; providing answers and accountability for many families, delivering on our commitments to those who served in Northern Ireland, and

helping society in Northern Ireland to look forward

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