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Owen Smith MP, Labour's Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, commenting on the Northern Ireland Secretary's update on political talks, said:

"The news that the talks process in Northern Ireland is now, effectively, to be put on hold over the summer comes as no surprise, but it will be greeted with disappointment and concern. It is never a good idea to have a political vacuum in Northern Ireland, especially through the summer months, and it is regrettable that the Government has not been able to bring about agreement between the parties after more than six months of stasis.

"For some weeks now that the political parties have felt under little pressure to come to a deal and that is why it has been frustrating that the Prime Minister has so steadfastly refused to engage properly in the talks process. I share the Secretary of State's hope that a deal can be done when the parties return in the Autumn, but if that hope is to materialise into a reassembled executive, the Conservative Government will need to engage with greater energy and focus."