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Adams wants dissidents isolated

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MARY MINIHAN

SF REACTION: SINN FÉIN president Gerry Adams has said dissident republican groups should not be given "room to breathe".

Speaking after a meeting with Taoiseach Brian Cowen and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Micheál Martin, in Government Buildings yesterday, Mr Adams said the groups had a limited capacity.

"They showed that recently and three people are now dead, a number of people are injured. And the fact is that the rest of us, and that's right across this island, have said we don't want it," he said.

"And that's where the focus needs to be and that's why I make the point that they shouldn't have any room to breathe, that no one should support them, give succour to them, join them or work with them."

Asked about a warning from the most senior PSNI officer in the Derry area that dissident republicans are on a recruitment drive in the city, Mr Adams said he did not wish to speculate.

Mr Adams said he had a good meeting with the Taoiseach and he believed that Mr Cowen was "seized of the urgency of the situation".

He said Dublin MEP Mary Lou McDonald, the party's new vice-president, was heading up an engagement with the "very, very broad republican base".

This would "make sure that these people have no sense of any breathing space whatsoever, that there's no ambiguity or ambivalence".

He said the British government should "stick closely to the political parties and to the political process" and not sideline Northern politicians.

Mr Adams and Ms McDonald were accompanied by the North's Regional Development Minister, Conor Murphy.

A statement released by the Department of the Taoiseach last night said a detailed discussion on the latest situation in the North had taken place.

"There was full agreement on the need for everyone to stick together in the face of recent attacks."

Mr Cowen and Mr Martin were "heartened by the united response to the attacks and determined to press ahead with the development of the democratic political institutions in Northern Ireland, including through the forthcoming devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Executive."

The statement said they welcomed the fact that the relevant legislation had been passed at Westminster this week.

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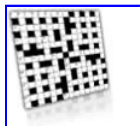
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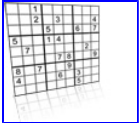
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