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## Adams calls for unity against threat to peace

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DAN KEENAN and NEIL CARNDUFF

**SINN FEIN REACTION:** SINN FÉIN president Gerry Adams said those responsible for Monday night's murder "want to destroy the gains made by the peace process".

"The political institutions, the peace process itself and Sinn Féin are as much a target for them as those they killed or injured," he said. "They have no strategy, no rationale and no popular support for their actions."

Speaking to *The Irish Times*, he endorsed Martin McGuinness's decision to stand alongside Peter Robinson and Sir Hugh Orde.

"It marks complete unity between unionists and republicans in facing up to the threat to the peace process, to the political institutions and to a decent future for the people of this island," he said.

"We are against what is happening. It has to be brought to an end and the people need to stand united to do that."

Asked if the killings were murders, he said: "Absolutely. We are very clear in dealing with this. The battle with those who want to drag the whole process back will be won on the street and in the hearts and minds of the populace."

Referring to Martin McGuinness's comments that dissident groupings were traitors who had betrayed the people of Ireland, Mr Adams said: "Obviously Martin articulates our position." He said the wrong response to the murders would be "kneejerk and going down a militarist agenda".

He added: "It has to be dealt with at a popular, public and political as well as a policing matter."

He said he was sensitive to unionist concerns about his party's position on them. "Our position is unequivocal and unconditional in all these matters. There would not be a peace process if it wasn't for the diligence and commitment of republicans."

There was strong condemnation yesterday from all parties at Stormont. The Ulster Unionists, the SDLP, DUP, Alliance and Progressive Unionist parties all condemned the killing.

Representatives from Ireland's four main churches also condemned the murder.

In a joint statement, the Catholic Bishop of Dromore, Dr John McAreavey, and the Rt Rev Harold Millar, Church of Ireland Bishop of Down and Dromore, described the killing as "morally bankrupt".

They added: "Those who perpetrated this murder and other recent attacks have nothing to offer the future of society. Their 'god' is destruction."

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, the Rt Rev Dr Donald Patton, qualified the attack as "outrageous and senseless", and urged full support for the security services. Rev Aian Ferguson, president of the Methodist Church in Ireland, praised the unanimity in the Assembly over the murder.

This article appears in the print edition of the Irish Times

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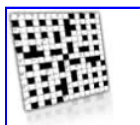
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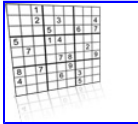
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