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Sinn Féin Protest March on Sunday

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Speaking today at a press conference, North Belfast Assembly member Gerry Kelly MLA said that;

"Sinn Féin is determined that the focus of our protest is the British Army march and the irresponsible decision by the British MoD to stage such an event in Belfast.

The clear opposition to this military parade points up the stupidity involved in staging such an event."

Mr. Kelly went on to say that Sinn Féin is determined "that those attending the protest can do so safely. Therefore we are proposing to switch our rally and protest to the Grosvenor Road/Fisherwick Place, with Dunville Park as the Assembly point.

Sinn Féin is also determined that the protest this Sunday will not be hijacked by so called dissident groups, or some loyalist elements or English fascists."

Mr Kelly said:

"The decision by the British Ministry of Defence to organise a military parade through Belfast City centre is totally unacceptable. The history of the British Army in Ireland is one of great cruelty and hurt. Victims of collusion and British State violence are particularly offended and incensed by Sundays march.

The Sinn Féin protest on Sunday is intended to highlight our opposition and to do so in a peaceful and dignified way.

We will not allow any group - either so called dissident republican or some loyalist elements or English fascists - to hijack the protest of the victims of British State violence.

All of those taking part in our protest must be able to do so safely and return home safely. Therefore Sinn Féin is proposing altering the route of the protest. We are now planning on assembling in Dunville Park at 10:30am and departing at 11:00am along the Grosvenor Road to the city centre.

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If you live outside of Ireland you can still play your part.

Our rally and protest will take place at the junction of the Grosvenor Road and Fisherwick Place.

This would facilitate republicans and unionists being on the streets of Belfast in a peaceful way and at the same time, while respecting each others differences.

We want to reiterate that the singular focus of our protest is the British MoD march. The changes we are proposing will ensure this.

Our protest will still be adjacent to the route of the planned British Army parade. If the PSNI properly police the British Army parade and the loyalist mobilisation then the city can return to normal quickly.

We trust the Parades Commission will play a positive role in facilitating this.

In conclusion we are concerned that dissident republican groups are seeking to hijack the justifiable concerns of victims of British State violence for their own narrow end. Neither Sinn Féin nor the relatives groups want any part of that.

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