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Irish Republican Army (IRA) Statement, 23 October 2001

[\[CAIN Home\]](#)

[\[KEY EVENTS\]](#) [\[Key Issues\]](#) [\[Conflict Background\]](#)

PEACE: [\[Menu\]](#) [\[Summary\]](#) [\[Reading\]](#) [\[Background\]](#) [\[Chronology 1\]](#) [\[Chronology 2\]](#)
[\[Chronology 3\]](#) [\[Articles\]](#) [\[Agreement\]](#) [\[Sources\]](#)

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Full text of Irish Republican Army (IRA) statement on decommissioning 23 October 2001

The IRA is committed to our republican objectives and to the establishment of a united Ireland based on justice, equality and freedom.

In August 1994, against a backdrop of lengthy and intensive discussions involving the two governments and others, the leadership of the IRA called a complete cessation of military operations in order to create the dynamic for a peace process.

'Decommissioning' was no part of that. There was no ambiguity about this.

Unfortunately there are those within the British Establishment and the leadership of unionism who are fundamentally opposed to change.

At every opportunity they have used the issue of arms as an excuse to undermine and frustrate progress.

It was for this reason that decommissioning was introduced to the process by the British Government. It has been used since to prevent the changes which a lasting peace requires.

In order to overcome this and to encourage the changes necessary for a lasting peace the leadership of Oglai na hEireann has taken a number of substantial initiatives.

These include our engagement with the IICD [decommissioning body] and the inspection of a number of arms dumps by the two International Inspectors, Cyril Ramaphosa and Martti Ahtisaari.

No one should doubt the difficulties these initiatives cause for us, our volunteers and our support base.

The Political process is now on the point of collapse.

Such a collapse would certainly and eventually put the overall peace process in jeopardy.

There is a responsibility upon everyone seriously committed to a just peace to do our best to avoid this.

Therefore, in order to save the peace process we have implemented the scheme agreed with

the IICD in August.

Our motivation is clear.

This unprecedented move is to save the peace process and to persuade others of our genuine intentions.

P O'Neill, Irish Republican Publicity Bureau, Dublin.

CAIN contains information and source material on the conflict and politics in Northern Ireland.
CAIN is based within the University of Ulster.