



**CHRISTINE QUINN FOR  
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President Michael D. Higgins speaking to the United Nations General Assembly Tuesday.

## Higgins upbraids UN

By Irish Echo Staff

President Michael D. Higgins spoke Tuesday to the United Nations General Assembly on the issue of peace building and sustaining peace.

It was the first major engagement during a week-long visit to New York that will see the Irish president attend a number of events dealing with an array of global and community issues.

In his General Assembly address, the global picture that the Irish president depicted for his audience was not a comforting one.

And Mr. Higgins took the opportunity to level criticism at the UN Security Council, which Ireland hopes to return to as a rotating member after a vote two years from now.

"Is it not a profound condemnation of what we have made of the legacies of our cultures, reason, ethics and belief systems, that we, in these first decades of the twenty-first century, live in a world that is home to so much war: wars the preparations for which absorb the finest minds in science and technology; wars in which civilians are more at risk than ever before, subject to atrocities, famine and starvation and, to an unprecedented degree, displacement," President Higgins told the Assembly.

"It is an affront to humanity that, in these first decades of the twenty-first century, at a time when we have the capacity to abolish all forms of human poverty, we share a planet with hundreds of millions who are, even as we speak here today, deprived of their most fundamental rights, deprived of a dignified existence," he said.

"If we are to truly commit ourselves to the objective of sustaining peace we must discard any narrow and cynical realism. The young of the world are appalled by any suggestion that what is normative is for the General Assembly, and that the strut of the powerful and the wielders of power can prevail in the Security Council. That is what is losing the young."

Mr. Higgins will on Wednesday meet with UN Secretary General António Guterres and the President of the UN General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák.

He will also have a series of bilateral meetings with other heads of state and senior UN officials.

Mr. Higgins is accompanied on his visit, which runs through Saturday, by his wife Sabina and by the Irish government's Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Katherine Zappone.

# Political Spring

*Hearing, letter, campaign signal renewed political activity*

By Ray O'Hanlon

Irish America is waking up to the spring of 2018 with a renewed burst of grassroots and congressional activity.

In recent weeks there have been gatherings devoted to the twentieth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, renewed congressional calls for a North envoy, a bipartisan congressional letter on legacy issues and, in most recent days, the launch of the McGuinness Principles and a campaign that is already attracting significant political support.

"The McGuinness Principles is the road map all parties should follow to fully realize the promise of the Good Friday Agreement, and achieve full equality, lasting peace, self-determination and all-Ireland prosperity," Senator Charles Schumer said in a statement endorsing the four principles named in honor of the late Martin McGuinness.

Senator Schumer hosted the sons of Martin McGuinness, Fiachra and Emmett, at his Capitol Hill office on Wednesday of last week.

On Thursday evening the McGuinness brothers were honored guests at the New York City unveiling of the principles held at Hunter College's Roosevelt House and presided over by New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli.

In his statement, Senator Schumer said that the torch of Martin McGuinness was being carried forward by his two sons "who had courageously and correctly called on all parties to the Good Friday Agreement, including the British government, to uphold critical, yet unfulfilled elements of the agreement, so that full equality, mutual respect, lasting peace and a shared prosperity can be fully realized in the North and throughout all of Ireland."

And Schumer added: "I had a productive and very informative meeting with the McGuinness brothers, Laborers International President Terry O'Sullivan, the AOH and Brehon Law Society, and am pleased to throw my full support behind the McGuinness Principles and the worthy effort to energize the forward momentum to fully realize the promise of all critical parts of the historic Good Friday Agreement.

"That historic agreement, now twenty years old, did so much to bring the situation in the



Under the gaze of FDR, New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli with Fiachra McGuinness (left) and Emmett McGuinness. PHOTO BY JAMES F. BROWN.

North from one of armed violence to peaceful coexistence and resolving conflict through politics, however slow and difficult that has proved. But more must be done now to fully realize its promises.

"I have a long and proud history of supporting efforts to achieve peace, justice, reconciliation and self-determination for all the people of Ireland.

"From the Scots Irish influx in the 1700s to the waves of immigrants that shaped the physical landscape and very future of this nation, the people of Ireland have a deep and enduring bond with America and with the State of New York, and this meeting is a continuation of that abiding relationship. I am hopeful and confident that all parties working together can achieve these vital goals."

Full news and photo coverage of the latest congressional activity and the McGuinness Principles on Pages 5, 7 and 8.

## McGuinness Principles hailed at Hunter gathering

By Ray O'Hanlon

The campaign behind the newly minted McGuinness Principles has received a double boost with backing from Senator Charles Schumer and a packed New York City launch on Thursday evening, April 19, hosted by New York State Comptroller, Tom DiNapoli.

The gathering, at Hunter College's Roosevelt House, was attended by the sons of the late Martin McGuinness, Emmett and Fiachra.

On Wednesday, the McGuinness brothers and representatives of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Brehon Law Society had met with Senator Schumer at his office on Capitol Hill.

After the meeting, Schumer issued a statement supporting the four principles, which call for a bill of rights for Northern Ireland, full statutory equality for the Irish language, equal justice for all victims of the conflict and their families, and a referendum on Irish unity.

At the Thursday evening launch - which came after a first unveiling of the principles the previous week at the Irish Studies Institute at Molloy College on Long Island - tribute was paid to the late Martin McGuinness in words, and by way of the screening of a film in which McGuinness, shortly before his passing last year, looked back at his life and work.

Also lauded as a special guest honoree was actor, author and raconteur Malachy McCourt.

Comptroller DiNapoli, in his remarks and turning to Emmett and Fiachra McGuinness said: "Your father will go down as one of the giants."

DiNapoli, who oversees New York State pension funds, and that portion of the funds in-



Emmett and Fiachra McGuinness with Congressman Joe Kennedy III.

vested in companies doing business in Northern Ireland, said that Martin McGuinness had been a "great, great hero," and that his "relentless leadership" had helped transform Northern Ireland.

DiNapoli, turning to the issue of Brexit, said that a hard border in Ireland "would set so much back," and "we don't want that."

He said that adopting the McGuinness Principles would be the "right thing to do" and would help improve the investment climate in Northern Ireland.

The McGuinness Principles were key in terms of taking the next step, DiNapoli told his audience in what is the home of Hunter College's Public Policy Institute and the former family home (from 1908 to 1933) of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Publisher Niall O'Dowd told the room that "Martin never stopped being who he was."

And that was being a warrior, a visionary and a revolutionary.

"It's up to us to finish the job with the McGuinness Principles," Mr. O'Dowd said.

Fiachra McGuinness said

that the Good Friday Agreement had not been fully realized and was not reaching its potential. Brexit, he warned, would effectively tear up the agreement.

He described the principles named after his father as "four common sense human rights initiatives."

"Our family believes that by supporting the McGuinness Principles you can achieve the objectives and hopes our father worked so hard for during his life," he said.

Jennifer Frankola Crawford of the Brehon Law Society said that all at the gathering had come together to mark a milestone in a journey, and to set a new course.

The McGuinness Principles, she said, were a call for the delivery of the promise of the Good Friday Agreement.

Sean Pender of the Ancient Order of Hibernians said that more than hope was needed to secure full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

The McGuinness Principles, which threatened no one, would be supported by a coalition of organizations and Irish America with a view to seeing the full implementation of the



Pictured at the office of Senator Charles Schumer (l-r) Union leader Terry O'Sullivan, Fiachra McGuinness, Senator Schumer, Emmett McGuinness, and Marty Glennon of the Brehon Law Society.

agreement.

Mr. Pender noted that the McGuinness Principles had been read into the Congressional Record by AOH National President, Judge James McKay, during a recent hearing in Washington chaired by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ).

The Roosevelt House gather-

ing heard appeals for help in growing a grassroots movement in support of the McGuinness Principles, a movement that would be seeking political support and supportive legislative resolutions in the days ahead.

More at [www.mcguinnessprinciples.com](http://www.mcguinnessprinciples.com)

## The four McGuinness Principles

### THE ENACTMENT OF A BILL OF RIGHTS

Per the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission was tasked with putting forward recommendations for an Irish Bill of Rights. In 2008, the Commission proposed official recognition of a broad range of social and economic rights in Northern Ireland, but successive British governments have failed to act on these recommendations. The McGuinness Principles affirm the urgent necessity that the rights of Ireland's citizens in the North be protected in accordance with the Good Friday Agreement.

### FULL STATUTORY EQUALITY FOR THE IRISH LANGUAGE

The McGuinness Principles call for the British Government to honor its commitments in the Good Friday Agreement and subsequent St. Andrews Agreement of 2006 to "take resolute action to promote the [Irish] language; facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life where there is appropriate demand" by establishing full statutory equality for the Irish language.

### EQUAL JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF THE CONFLICT AND THEIR FAMILIES

Many victims of the conflict in the North and their families have waited decades to learn the full truth about what happened to them and their loved ones. The McGuinness Principles call for funding so that formal inquests into accusations by all parties be allowed to move forward.

### A REFERENDUM ON UNITY TO AFFIRM IRISH SELF-DETERMINATION

Under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, the British government committed to formally "recognize that it is for the people of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively and without external impediment, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent." The Good Friday Agreement committed the British government to not making "any change in the status of Northern Ireland save with the consent of a majority of its people." In light of Brexit, which was not supported by a majority of voters in Northern Ireland, the McGuinness Principles call for the British government to adhere to the terms of the Good Friday Agreement by allowing the Irish people to determine their future through a referendum on unity.



## Every blade counts

Because of the fodder crisis facing Irish farmers, Shannon Airport has been cutting the grass between the runways much earlier in the year than usual. The sun was actually shining when this photo was taken last week. Photo courtesy Shannon Airport.

# Echo Gallery

## McGuinness Principles launch at Hunter College

Hunter College's Roosevelt House played host last week to the New York City launch of the McGuinness Principles. The event was attended by the sons of the late Martin McGuinness, Fiachra and Emmett. PHOTOS BY JAMES F. BROWN.



Fiachra McGuinness speaks to the gathering.



New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli (second from right) was the main speaker on the night.



Special guest and honoree Malachy McCourt addresses the room.



Emmett McGuinness, Malachy McCourt, Hunter College President Jennifer J. Raab, Fiachra McGuinness and Comptroller DiNapoli.



Fiachra McGuinness, Comptroller DiNapoli and Emmett McGuinness.



Those in attendance paid close attention to all the speakers.



Comptroller Tom DiNapoli presented a proclamation to the McGuinness brothers.



Comptroller DiNapoli presented a proclamation to the acclaimed Malachy McCourt.

## Cavan Association honors O'Reilly, Coyle

The Cavan P & B Association of New York held its annual St. Patrick's Dinner Dance on Saturday, April 7 at Riccardo's-by-the-Bridge in Astoria. The 2018 guest of honor was Ciaran O'Reilly (co-founder/producing director, Irish Repertory Theatre) and the Mike Lynch Distinguished Service Award recipient was Patrick Coyle.

PHOTOS BY NUALA PURCELL



Ciaran O'Reilly (co-founder/producing director, Irish Repertory Theatre), Cavan P&B Association of New York President Michael O'Reilly, and Mike Lynch Distinguished Service Award recipient Patrick Coyle.



Association members, guests and honorees enjoying the evening.

## Martin's dream

### Editor:

During the eulogy given by President Bill Clinton he noted of Martin McGuinness, "Somewhere along the way, for whatever reason, he decided to give peace a chance. Some of the reasons were principled, some were practical, but he decided."

To those that knew Martin, or followed modern day Irish politics, you understood that Martin was a very principled and disciplined man.

There will be plenty of debate for many years to come over Martin's legacy. I, like many other Irish Americans, believe Martin's legacy will be forever engrained as a part of Irish history along the likes of those who came before him and shared the same goal - a United and Free Ireland.

Martin's path never strayed from this goal. It was his principles that drove him to continue to persuade the British, the loyalists, the people of Ireland, but most of all Irish America and the world, that a united Ireland is the only way the people of Ireland could be free.

Through the financial and moral support of Irish America, both he and Gerry Adams convinced then president-elect Bill Clinton that there was a path towards peace in the north of Ireland.

Against the advice of many in his own cabinet, newly elected President Clinton decided it was well worth the investment to personally hear from Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness and consider if they could deliver if given the opportunity. He appointed retired U.S. Senator George Mitchell as special envoy to the north of Ireland to see if there was an opportunity to give peace a chance. The fruit of their collective efforts was the Good Friday Agreement. However, twenty years since the GFA, there are many aspects of that agreement that remain unfulfilled.

In a concerted attempt to fulfill Martin's dream, Irish America has coalesced around four core principles: Equality, Respect, Truth and the Right to Self-Determination - the McGuinness Principles.

Many Irish American organizations came together to enshrine and promote these very simple principles named for Martin McGuinness.

The Institute of Irish Studies at Molloy College was the first to roll out the Principles on the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. One week later, these organizations invited Martin's sons Fiachra and Emmett, to the U.S. to lend support for these principles.

Organized labor, with the support and guidance of Terry O'Sullivan, General President of the Laborers International Union of North America, hosted a D.C. Friends of Ireland event where Martin's sons spoke with labor leaders from around the country and California governor Jerry Brown.

Fiachra and Emmett then went to the Capitol and met with Congressmen Neal, Suozzi, Boyle, King, John Lewis, Kennedy and Kildee, as well

as contacting many others that couldn't meet personally with them but have promised their support for the principles appropriately named after their father.

The Capitol trip concluded with an overwhelming endorsement from Senate Minority Leader, Chuck Schumer.

Before returning home to Derry, New York State Comptroller, Thomas DiNapoli, hosted Martin's sons and promoted the McGuinness Principles at Hunter College's Roosevelt House.

Speakers included Niall O'Dowd, Jennifer Frankola from the Brehons, Sean Pender of the AOH, as well as Comptroller DiNapoli and Malachy McCourt.

Each praised the legacy of Martin as a peacemaker. His son, Fiachra, spoke eloquently of his father. He said there was much more that his father wanted to see accomplished. He thanked Irish America for the continued support they have shown his family and their commitment to promoting their father's legacy and capturing them in four very basic principles.

Irish America has been a driving force and major supporter for every campaign seeking the reunification of the island of Ireland. Through this age of social media and global networks, Irish America is once again looking to support the principles so admirably displayed by Martin throughout his life.

President Clinton also noted in his eulogy that, "So that's what he did, he persevered, and he prevailed. He risked the rejection of his comrades and the wrath of his adversaries. He made honorable compromises and was strong enough to keep them, and came to be trusted because his word was good."

Martin lived in Ireland throughout some of the most horrifying times in its history, yet, he knew that was not the best that the people of Ireland had to offer, so he made it his life's work to change the course of Irish history.

It is his perseverance that really guides these principles and those Irish Americans that stand behind them. He has shown us the path forward and it is our responsibility to now walk in the chieftain's shoes and make his vision of Ireland a reality.

Readers can lend support for the McGuinness Principles at [www.McGuinnessPrinciples.com](http://www.McGuinnessPrinciples.com), or by following updates at #McGuinnessPrinciples.

Whenever you speak with elected officials in the U.S., Ireland and England, ask them if they support the McGuinness Principles of Equality, Respect, Truth and the Right to Self-Determination.

If they don't, please spend some time and ask why not. Together we can all make a difference by embracing the fortitude and perseverance demonstrated throughout his life by Martin McGuinness.

**Marty Glennon  
See Cliff,**

## A hard-hearted time

This from a recent report in the Los Angeles Times: "Thomas Homan, acting director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, doubled down Wednesday on his controversial comments from last year that all undocumented immigrants should be worried about getting arrested and deported under the Trump administration."

"I'll never back down on those words," Homan said at the Border Security Expo in San Antonio, a conference that connects law enforcement with companies looking to win contracts. 'If you violate the laws of this country, if you enter illegally - which is a crime - it's not going to be OK anymore.'"

Mr. Homan perfectly encapsulates Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the 2018 version.

He is a perfect fit for an administration, a senior aide in which, Stephen Miller, has attempted to drive a coach and four between the words of Emma Lazarus on the Statue of Liberty pedestal and Lady Liberty herself.

For the record, Mr. Homan opposes any standalone legislation dealing with the DACA issue. And of course he wants to see a wall built on the border with Mexico.

There are no excuses in his world, no shades of gray.

Lucky him that he has such an uncomplicated work life.

The story of America as a land of immigrants has, of course, always been shaded. There has never been a perfect moment in the story.

But there have been better moments, easier times.

This isn't one of them.

Under President Obama ICE had a busy docket but there was an attempt to apply emphasis in certain areas, and to lessen it in others.

There were plenty of deportations during the Obama years, so many in fact that Mr. Obama

earned the sobriquet of "deporter-in-chief."

But those deported typically had criminal records, had been deported previously, or had recently arrived in the United States.

The sense during the Obama years was that those who had been in the country for a longer time, had obeyed the law, paid taxes, would be left in relative safety while Congress worked out a deal on immigration reform.

Well, we all know where that went.

Congress is still wrestling with immigration, though the emphasis of late is in significant part focused on reducing legal immigration and ending the diversity visa program - which is about the only way an Irish person can gain legal entry to the U.S. in a general sense, and not in a way related to a specific work visa or marriage to the citizen.

While Congress goes round and round the agents of ICE are going round a lot of places enforcing a much broader application of the law than was the case in the Obama years.

Every undocumented or illegal immigrant is a target for detention and deportation, even, it appears, when an individual is dealing with ICE's sister agency, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, in an effort to secure legalization.

So we have been witness to families literally being dragged apart on the street, raids on homes, workplaces, courthouses, and, as referred to above, even USCIS offices. The New York Times reported last week on one such raid carried out in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Of course, all ICE is doing is enforcing the law and for many ICE agents this enforcement is not necessarily devoid of a personal emotional toll.

But for those who take their cue directly from the top, from Mr. Homan, from President Trump and from Mr. Miller, it is fair to assume that there is little or no emotion in play.

These are hard-hearted times indeed.

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# GFA rooted in West Belfast community



**Analysis**  
Gerry Adams  
letters  
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The event at Queens University to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, was an opportunity to reminisce about the difficulties we all

faced at that time, and the lessons for today.

An earlier event organized by Féile an Phobail at St. Mary's College on the Falls Road put the spotlight on the positive and constructive role of the community and voluntary sector in the peace process.

This aspect of the Good Friday Agreement and of the peace process has never been properly examined or appreciated.

It was also particularly appropriate that Féile organized the event given that this year Féile celebrates its 30th birthday.

For those of you too young to remember, West Belfast in 1988 was a militarized war zone. Heavily armed British troops and RUC officers occupied our

streets.

British Army and RUC forts like Jericho, Henry Taggart, Silver City, Pegasus, dominated the streetscape and main roads.

As part of their efforts at control, the British constantly monitored the movement of people. The military bases on top of Divis Tower and the Nurses flats at Broadway, along with cameras on every fort and barracks, constantly observed people.

House and street searches, military roadblocks and stop and search operations were a regular feature of life.

And everything was noted for intelligence purposes.

I remember the Brits boasting on one occasion of stopping three quarters of a million vehicles in one two-week period!

There was also the ever present threat of sectarian attack by unionist death squads, often operating in collusion with British state forces. And the IRA was active. Conflict was a constant in the life of this community.

The catalyst for Féile was the killing in Gibraltar of three young IRA Volunteers from West Belfast, Mairead Farrell, Seán Savage and Dan McCann.

In the two weeks that followed, nine more people died - another four from this constituency. The people of this proud community were demonized and labelled by some as savages and animals.

Féile an Phobail was our response to this. It was our way of demonstrating to the world that the people of west Belfast are a generous, humorous, talented, gifted and inclusive community.

We were lucky in one respect. The system of discrimination and inequality employed for decades by Unionists and the British had forced nationalist communities to fall back on our own resourcefulness, ingenuity and determination.

For example, after the pogroms of 1969, and the introduction of internment by the British, we witnessed the largest movement of a civilian population within Europe since the end of World War II.

Thousands of families were forced to flee their homes. I remember many being rehoused by us in half-finished homes in Twinbrook, Andersonstown, Moyard and other places.

There were no windows, floors, doors or heating. These houses were literally built around these families. Incidentally, the unionist parties campaigned against the building of



At St. Mary's flanked by Bertie Ahern and Michelle O'Neill.

***The British were outraged. West Belfast was the so-called "terrorist community." They refused to allow the visit. Then when the president insisted that she was going to come she was refused diplomatic security protection***

Poleglass, which was intended to ease the housing crisis.

In the midst of riots and street fighting the bus services often collapsed.

Out of that shambles emerged the Black Taxi service. Political vetting, too, was an integral part of the British state's efforts to marginalize and isolate republicans, and anyone else deemed disloyal by them.

Community groups suffered cuts in funding, and jobs were lost as a result of this policy, which was supported by the SDLP and the local Catholic bishop. Despite all of this, wonderful projects like Conway Mill survived and are now flourishing.

This is because the people and the community groups of West Belfast refused to acquiesce to any of this.

In 1993, their strength and resilience helped break the demonization policy of two governments.

On that occasion, President Mary Robinson visited Belfast.

She was invited by community leaders in West Belfast to attend "A Celebration of Culture and Creativity." I was on the list of attendees. The late Inez McCormack and Eileen Howell, and others still active today, played a central role in this initiative.

The British were outraged. West Belfast was the so-called "terrorist community." They refused to allow the visit. Then

when the president insisted that she was going to come she was refused diplomatic security protection.

The response of the Irish establishment wasn't much better. Labour leader Dick Spring made several efforts to persuade Mary Robinson to pull out of the visit.

When that failed, Irish government officials tried to ensure that I wasn't invited and when that didn't work, that I would not meet the president, and most definitely we would not shake hands.

In the face of this official hostility by two governments the West Belfast community remained rock solid.

To her credit, so did President Robinson.

But the visit unleashed a torrent of abuse against her. The Sunday Independent, which at that time was consistently attacking John Hume for just talking to me, called on her to resign.

Later, the antagonism of officialdom toward West Belfast again reared its ugly head when I organized a meeting between the board of the Bunscoil from the Shaws Road Gaeltacht and British Secretary of State, Mo Mowlam.

For years, the west Belfast community had financially supported a Naiscoil and Bunscoil with no state backing, and against the opposition of an antagonistic Department of Edu-

cation.

Mo told me before the meeting that her intention was to give the Shaws Road Bunscoil funding for the first time.

She said she had not told her officials.

When the meeting ended, and we left her office having been told funding was to be granted, one of the department officials whispered to one of the Bunscoil delegation: "We'll get you in the long grass."

I brought the delegation and the culprit straight back into Mo Mowlam and we faced him down in front of his boss.

In September 1997, when Sinn Féin finally entered into talks, we were inundated with messages of support from local community groups which faxed, posted or hand delivered messages of solidarity.

I know that the Sinn Féin negotiating team was encouraged and sustained by that support. More importantly, I am convinced that without the courage and steadfastness of community leaders and activists during the decades of discrimination and violence, the search for peace would have been much more difficult.

The community and voluntary sector of West Belfast sector is owed a great debt of gratitude. Without their resilience and commitment to equality, respect and inclusivity there would be no Good Friday Agreement.



The late Inez McCormack.



Mary Robinson in a 2017 photo. ROLLINGNEWS.IE PHOTO.