# Naomi Long calls for reform in Northern Ireland's political landscape



Naomi Long, leader of the Alliance Party, delivered a keynote address at her party's annual conference in Belfast, where she asserted that the powersharing institutions at Stormont are just as vulnerable now as they were before their collapse in 2022. This concern arises amid a political landscape that has, unfortunately, continued to favour the entrenched elites represented by Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) since the recent general election saw a Labour government take root, largely disregarding the voices of constituents yearning for real change.

In her remarks, Ms Long underscored the urgent need for institutional reform in Northern Ireland's political column, still predominantly dominated by the same two parties that have shown little regard for the people's welfare. She emphasised that the current structure, which allows these parties to bring governance to a standstill, must be critically reevaluated to create a more effective system that truly reflects the diverse needs of all communities.

“While mere survival and the barest of functionalities can never be taken for granted in Northern Ireland politics, that’s surely the least our communities deserve,” Ms Long stated. “Those we represent demand much more than this: they require stable institutions that are resilient and serve everybody.”

Despite the Alliance Party's presence in the devolved government, holding two ministries, Ms Long expressed concern that significant regressions have occurred due to the repeated failures of past administrations. She noted, “Each time the Assembly collapsed, it wasn’t just a political setback; it caused ‘immeasurable damage’ to public trust in governance,” underlining her belief that much of the past year has been consumed by efforts to rebuild a sense of faith in a system that remains shaky at its core.

The party leader called upon both the UK and Irish governments to commence a serious dialogue on the necessary reforms—conversations that must be undertaken without the undue influence of impending elections or crises. Ms Long mentioned her outreach to both the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister, imploring them to make genuine engagement with political parties and the public on reform issues a priority.

In addition to institutional reform discussions, Ms Long seized the opportunity to critique US President Donald Trump. She notably declined an invitation to the St Patrick's Day celebrations in the United States—an event where other Northern Irish politicians, including those from the DUP and Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), are expected to engage with Trump. “While I respect the rights of US citizens to elect their leaders, I refuse to feign respect for the current occupant of that office,” she remarked, a strong stance reflecting the disappointment many constituents feel towards political figures who prioritize posturing over principled engagement.

Long’s address included sharp observations about the detrimental nature of Trump's policies, particularly regarding international human rights. She questioned how meaningful dialogue could occur with someone who appears to champion the displacement of thousands, dismissing any lingering hope for a just resolution as mere naivety.

The people of Northern Ireland crave leadership that prioritises economic opportunities and genuine goodwill over empty rhetoric. Ms Long’s choice of representation at the St Patrick’s Day celebrations, Nuala McAllister, aligns with the party's mission to push discussions around policing and substantive reform.

Concluding her speech, Ms Long reinforced the imperative of maintaining ethical conduct in political engagements, stating, “It matters to us and our constituents that we represent the values we stand for—international law, environmental responsibility, fostering constructive relations, global stability, and peace. Integrity is not optional; it is essential for our democracy.”

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naomi_Long> - This URL provides background information on Naomi Long, including her role as leader of the Alliance Party and her political career, which supports the context of her keynote address.
* <https://www.allianceparty.org/latest_news> - This URL offers updates on the Alliance Party's activities and statements, which can corroborate Naomi Long's emphasis on institutional reform and her engagement with political issues in Northern Ireland.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland> - This URL provides news coverage from the BBC on Northern Ireland, which can support discussions about the political landscape and the challenges faced by the power-sharing institutions at Stormont.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/northernireland> - This URL offers news articles from The Guardian on Northern Ireland, which can provide context on the political dynamics and the need for reform as highlighted by Naomi Long.
* <https://www.rte.ie/news/northern-ireland/> - This URL provides news coverage from RTÉ on Northern Ireland, which can support discussions about the political situation and the role of the Alliance Party in advocating for change.
* <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/> - This URL offers news articles from the Belfast Telegraph on Northern Ireland, which can provide additional context on the political challenges and the Alliance Party's stance on reform.
* <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/stormont-no-more-stable-now-than-before-it-collapsed-in-2022-naomi-long-THSF44JTBNBIZHYYGFGRXRRZA4/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data