



# Michael D Higgins: War of Independence did not need to happen

President marks centenary of the truce that ended the War of Independence

© Sat, Jul 10, 2021, 13:18

Ronan McGreevy

 President Michael D Higgins has said the War of Independence would not have happened had the democratic will of the Irish people been respected.

 In a statement marking the centenary of the truce which ended the War of Independence, President Higgins said the Irish people had expressed their desire to be free of British rule in the 1918 British general election in which Sinn Féin won 73 of the 105 seats in Ireland and set up Dáil Éireann.

The truce between Britain and Ireland came into force on midday on July 11th, 1921. Many thought it would not hold, but it did.

President Higgins referenced the thousands of people who gathered outside the Mansion House in the days leading up to the truce and their hopes for peace.

"As they gathered, anticipating, hoping for a truce that would lead to an enduring peace, they were carrying the grief of the 1918 flu epidemic; and ahead would be the tragic experience of the Civil War," he said.

"The signing of a truce between the combatants is an event that should be commemorated as a thirst for peace deferred. So many lives and so much suffering could have been spared had the democratic will as expressed by the people been respected."

President Higgins said the war could have ended sooner had mediation proposals by the archbishop of Perth Patrick Clune been accepted by the British side. President Higgins was taught at school by Archbishop Clune's nephew William Clune.

His peace initiative in December 1920 floundered because of an insistence that the IRA disarm in advance. Another 1,000 people died in the first six months of 1921.

"The truce is a significant event in the Decade of Commemorations. Reflecting on the truce, which was agreed 100 years ago, it is appropriate to recall how the people in the streets of villages, towns and cities hoped and prayed for peace," he said.

ADVERTISEMENT

"Twice in the previous three years they had expressed their wishes at the ballot box. That expression was rejected."

On Sunday President Higgins will attend the National Day of Commemoration to honour all men and women who died in past wars or on service with the *United Nations*

The event in Collins Barracks is due to end at midday at the exact time the truce came into force.

The President, the Taoiseach, members of the Government; the Council of State; Dáil and Seanad Éireann; Diplomatic Corps; Judiciary and Northern Ireland representatives will attend.

The ceremony comprises of an inter-faith service followed by a wreath laying by the President on behalf of the people of Ireland. The ceremony will conclude with an Air Corps flypast.

Commemoration Ceremonies will also be held in Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick and Waterford. In order to comply with Covid-19 public health guidelines these events are not open to the public.

The last fatalities of the War of Independence were in Killarney, Co Kerry when two British soldiers and a civilian, Hannah Carey (48), were shot dead just 15 minutes before the truce came into operation at midday on July 11th, 1921.

A commemoration to mark the truce in Co Kerry took place at the Gardens of Remembrance in Killarney on Saturday evening. The event was not open to the public due to Covid-19.

Seanad Éireann Cathaoirleach Senator Mark Daly said the Truce was a time to remember "those men and women of our greatest generation who struggled 100 years to achieve the ideals of peace and equality contained in the 1916 Proclamation".

The centenary of the truce had been earmarked as the only occasion for *State commemoration for the War of Independence, but no event has been scheduled.*

#### READ MORE

- ▶ Haiti asks for US military assistance to protect infrastructure after assassination
- ⊙ Back wins byelection comfortably as most voters stay at home
- ⊙ Martin's leadership of Fianna Fáil comes into focus after poor byelection
- ▶ Taoiseach 'not concerned' for his leadership after FF byelection performance
- ▶ 'People want a general election': Sinn Féin reacts to byelection performance

*Facts have no agenda. Real news has value. [Subscribe.](#)*