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## **BRITAIN REJECTS IRISH CALL FOR ROLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND RULE**

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Reuters (6 September 2017)

BELFAST (Reuters) - Britain on Tuesday rejected a call by the Irish foreign minister for Dublin to be given a role in the running of Northern Ireland if parties fail to revive the devolved power-sharing government, saying it would never countenance joint authority.

The 1998 peace deal that ended 30 years of violence in Northern Ireland between Irish nationalists and British unionists provides for a consultative role for the Irish government in the running of the British region.

Since January Irish nationalists Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) have failed to reach agreement on re-establishing the devolved administration and the British government has warned it may soon have to step in to rule the province directly for the first time in a decade.

Irish foreign minister Simon Coveney on Tuesday told journalists in Belfast that if talks to form a power-sharing government failed that there can be no British-only direct rule, adding that this was Irish government policy.

He did not give any details of what kind of role he expected for the Irish government, but said it would be very difficult to even contemplate how direct rule would function in that context.

In an apparent rebuff to Coveney's comments, a British government spokesman said in a statement that it would never countenance any arrangement, such as Joint Authority, inconsistent with the principle of consent in the (Good Friday) Agreement.

In the absence of devolved government, it is ultimately for the United Kingdom Government to provide the certainty over delivery of public services and good governance in Northern Ireland, as part of the United Kingdom, the statement said.

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Kaynak/Source: