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## Speeches

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### Speech of An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar T.D., Update on COVID-19

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Good afternoon everyone. Throughout our history, Good Friday has had a special meaning. It's a day associated with suffering, and sacrifice, and sorrow. And also with new beginnings. The promise of rebirth and renewal and better days to come.

It's also the day an agreement was signed in Belfast to bring peace to our island ending the troubles in the North.

During the worst year of those Troubles the poet Seamus Heaney spoke about what was happening and predicted that 'if we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere'.

Thank you for your forbearance and for the sacrifices you have made so far.

I know many people are feeling frustrated, and I know the fine weather makes it even harder. We want to be outside, we want to be with friends and family, and we want to feel like we can go anywhere. We want to be free.

Today's message is that we cannot be complacent and we cannot lose focus. What we are doing is difficult, but it is making a difference, so we have to keep going.

We need to persevere and we need to maintain our discipline and resolve.

The restrictions we introduced two weeks ago were set to expire on Sunday. Today the expert recommendation is to extend them for a further three weeks, until Tuesday May 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Government has accepted this recommendation.

I know many of you would like to know when things will go back to normal and life will be as it was. We are working towards that time and we are planning carefully so that we get there safely.

The truth is, nobody knows for certain when that will be or how our lives will be different when that comes.

Your sacrifice will save lives. What is an inconvenience for some will be a lifesaver for others. So I am calling on everyone to do what is being asked of them.

To be tolerant and compassionate, and to think about each other before we think about ourselves.

Nothing greater will be asked of any of us.

Stay strong, stay safe and stay at home.

Thank you.