

**SPEECH BY CLLR MARY FITZPATRICK ON THE 100<sup>TH</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
DEATH OF MARTIN SAVAGE.**

**DECEMBER 22, 2019.**

**NAVAN ROAD, ASHTOWN, DUBLIN 15.**

Ta an athas orm failtu libh go leir an ocad stairul seo.

On behalf of Fianna Fail Dublin Central and Fianna Fail Dublin west I am delighted to welcome the family of Martin Savage and Friends of Fianna Fail to our annual Martin Savage commemoration.

Every year we gather to remember and celebrate the heroic efforts of a young man from Sligo.

Savage moved to Dublin in 1915 and joined the Irish Volunteers.

As a 17 year old he took part in the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin and fought with Padraig Pearse and James Connolly in the GPO.

He was captured by the British Army and deported to England.

However undeterred, upon his release Savage returned to Dublin and resumed his fight for Irish freedom and became a Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion of the Dublin Brigade.

On the morning of 19 December 1919, Martin Savage and other volunteers met in Kellys half way House to assassinate the then British Viceroy and Commander of the British Army in Ireland, Lord John French.

The Volunteers' had been told that Lord French would be travelling in the second car of an armed convoy which would bring Lord French from Ashtown railway station to the Vice-Regal Lodge in Phoenix Park.

They had been informed that there would be two cars and Lord French was to be in the second car.

The plan was for after the first car had passed, Martin Savage, Tom Kehoe and Dan Breen would push a hay-cart across the road, block the second car and attack.

When the convoy appeared, each Volunteer fulfilled their role in the operation and attacked the second car forcing it to swerve off the road.

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However, unknown to the volunteers, Lord French was travelling in the first car and had escaped the blockade.

The occupants of the second car returned fire and a third car arrived and the volunteers came under increased fire from machine guns.

In the crossfire Dan Breen was shot in the leg and seconds later Martin Savage fell mortally wounded after being hit by a bullet in the neck.

He died in the arms of Dan Breen and his last words to Breen were "I'm done, but carry on....". Tom Kehoe and the wounded Dan Breen succeeded in carrying Martin Savage's body from the road and back to Kelly's Pub while the gunfight continued.

100 years later, almost to the day, we stand here to remember our dead hero Martin Savage and all our dead heroes, brave men and women.

We honour their fight for our freedom, their fight for our republic and their contribution to our history and our future.

We should take inspiration from their courage and determination and apply it to tackling the great challenges that face our republic today.

100 years on from Martin Savages death would he have thought the republic he died for would be threatened with extinction by climate change?

That the republic he died for would be experiencing the greatest housing crisis in the history of the state or that the young, sick and elderly would face endless waiting lists for desperately needed medical care.

I am sure it is not for this bleak future that Martin Savage and other young men and women fought for and gave their lives for.

I am certain young people today want a brighter future.

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I am certain young people today are right to demand better from our Government on climate action, housing and health.

Now more than ever Ireland needs a fairer and more progressive Government.

We owe it to the young people of today to work with them to ensure they have a future not threatened by climate change, homelessness and ill health.

In working to give young people today a brighter future to look forward to we can all take inspiration from Martin Savage.

Just as he and his colleagues demonstrated great bravery so too must we when it comes to making big, brave, game changing decisions to tackle climate change, housing and health.

I thank you all for coming here today to remember and honour Martin Savage and his colleagues who fought for Ireland.

Let's together dedicate ourselves to making 2020 a year when we take decisive and determined action to address climate action, housing and health.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh.