Scottish independence: Salmond’s statement in full

“Can I say thank-you for that reception but above all thank-you to Scotland for 1.6 million votes for Scottish independence.
“Our friends in the Highlands of Scotland are still to speak so the final results aren’t in, but we know there is going to be a majority for the No campaign.

“It is important to say that our referendum was an agreed and consented process and Scotland has by a majority decided not, at this stage, to become an independent country.

“I accept that verdict of the people and I call on all of Scotland to follow suit in accepting the democratic verdict of the people of Scotland.

“I think all of us in this campaign will say that 45%, that 1.6 million votes, is a substantial vote for Scottish independence and the future of this country.

“Let us say something which I hope unites all campaigns and all Scots. I think the process by which we have made our decision as a nation reflects enormous credit on Scotland.

“A turnout of 86% is one of the highest in the democratic world for any election or any referendum in history. This has been a triumph for the democratic process and for participation in politics.

“For example, the initiative by which our 16 and 17-year-olds were able to vote has proved to be a resounding success - I suspect no-one will ever again dispute their right and ability to participate fully and responsibly in democratic elections.

“So we now face the consequences of Scotland’s decision.

“Firstly, clause 30 of the Edinburgh Agreement is now in operation. On behalf of the Scottish Government I accept the result and I pledge to work constructively in the interests of Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom.

“Secondly, the unionist parties made vows late in the campaign to devolve more powers to Scotland.

“Scotland will expect these to be honoured in rapid course - as a reminder, we have been promised a second reading of a Scotland Bill by March 27 next year.

“Not just the 1.6 million Scots who voted for independence will demand that timetable is followed but all Scots who participated in this referendum will demand that timetable is followed.

“I’ll be speaking to the Prime Minister shortly after this statement and I have a press conference later today to reflect on that and the full result.

“But can I return, thirdly, to the empowerment of so many Scots entering the political process for the very first time.

“It is something that is so valuable it has to be cherished, preserved and built upon.
“I’ve said it a number of times in this campaign that the most moving thing I saw was the queue of people in Dundee two or three weeks ago, patiently waiting to register to vote - most of them for the first time ever, choosing to participate in the democratic process.

“Today in Inverurie I met a 61-year-old lady just coming out of the polling station who had never voted before in her life.

“I met a soldier, a former soldier, who hadn’t voted since he left the Army some 24 years ago.

“These people were inspired to enter the democratic politics by the thought they could make a difference in building something better for the country.

“These are people who all of us, as we campaigned, have met and been inspired by and all of us are a part of all of that experience that we have encountered.

“Whatsoever else we can say about this referendum campaign, we have touched sections of the community who have never before been touched by politics, these sections of the community have touched us and touched the political process.

“I don’t think that will ever be allowed to go back to business as usual in politics again.

“Friends, sometimes it is best to reflect where we are in a journey.

“45%, 1.6 million of our fellow citizens voting for independence.

“I don’t think any of us, whenever we entered politics, would have thought such a thing to be either credible or possible,” he said.

“Over the last few weeks we have seen a scare and a fear of enormous proportions - not a scaremongering directed at the Scottish people but the scare and the fear at the heart of the Westminster establishment as they realise the mass movement of people that was going forward in Scotland.

“Today of all days as we bring Scotland together, let us not dwell on the distance we have fallen short, let us dwell on the distance we have travelled and have confidence the movement is abroad in Scotland that will take this nation forward and we shall go forward as one nation.”