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condemning internment and violence in
Northern Ireland, and calling for the ending of
the Stormont government and the application
of civil rights and equality of treatment for all in
Northern Ireland.

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Drafted by *Worms Roman Gallagher, D.F.A.*, and
cleared by *Taoiseach* at 8pm after consultation
with *Ms F.A. and F.*

12/8
12th August, 1971.

The following statement has been issued today
by the Government Information Bureau on behalf
of the Taoiseach:-

During the past two years every effort has been made by the Government not merely to prevent the deterioration of the situation in the North but to obtain the implementation there of such policies as would provide and protect the civil and human rights of the non-unionists in the population. We have repeatedly exhorted the appropriate authorities to complete this task with the utmost speed and in full measure. We have asked the Northern minority to be patient and to accept that it was the intention of the British Government to honour the Downing Street Declaration of 19th August 1969. We have also asked them to reject the use of violence because not only would violence preclude the achievement of their civil rights but it would perpetuate the divisions among the Irish people.

We have acted with responsibility and restraint throughout all the difficulties of the past two years. What we have witnessed in the North in the past few days now compels us to state our position with complete clarity.

The violent reaction to the introduction of internment without trial in the North, which is seen to be a deliberate decision by the Stormont administration to attempt the outright repression of the minority, is not surprising. But my Government must make decisions in the light of the realities that exist; particularly so when emotions run high. These realities include the fact that the main victims of violence are the people in areas that have been consistently victimised by the Stormont system. It is already the case that innocent women, children and men of peace have lost their lives since Monday. It is not the wish of the Government to be in any way a cause of an escalation of an already grave situation or to see any addition to the toll of death, injury and destruction. The Government cannot, therefore, condone any actions which will lead to such an escalation and cannot and will not support any armed activity which will inevitably cause further suffering and death.

We have had discussions with elected leaders of the Northern minority in the past few days. We are united with them in our

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determination to ensure that the misgovernment to which the North has been subjected for so long shall end. The best method of achieving this objective is through political means. We have no doubt whatever that the subjection of the minority in the North to unjust law, biased administration and institutional violence will come to a conclusion through determined political action.

We hope the British people will come to realise that the administration of Northern Ireland is now and has been since it was created directed at the suppression of the civil and human rights of more than a third of the population. We know that the British public, if fully aware of the facts, would turn away in horror from what they have been asked to support, financially and otherwise, all these years in Northern Ireland.

The case can be simply stated. There exists in Northern Ireland a Government whose main concern appears to be to meet the wishes and demands of the most extreme elements within the unionist community. That Government is headed by one of the participants in the Downing Street Declaration which guaranteed equality of treatment for everyone in Northern Ireland irrespective of political views or religion. During the two years which have elapsed the implementation of that Declaration has been delayed and distorted.

Whatever were the intentions embodied in the Declaration it now has no credibility for the non-unionist population as they can see the extent of the influence and even control exercised on the Stormont Government by unionist extremists.

In these circumstances we are satisfied that, as an immediate objective of political action, the Stormont Government should be replaced by an administration in which power and decision-making will be equally shared between unionist and non-unionist.

The Stormont regime, which has consistently repressed the non-unionist population and bears responsibility for recurring violence in the Northern community, must be brought to an end. We call on all Irish people, North and South, who are opposed both to repression and violence to join together in political action aimed at this objective.

This is a surer road to peace with justice than self-destructive violence.