

NATIONAL ARCHIVES**IRELAND**

Reference Code:	2002/8/99
Title:	Statement issued by schoolteachers in the Creggan and Bogside areas of Derry expressing concern for the moral, physical, psychological and educational welfare of the children under their care.
Creation Date(s):	9 December, 1971
Level of description:	Item
Extent and medium:	2 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Access Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

9th December, 1971.

Dear Sir,

In the light of the enclosed Statement, we urge you to exert your influence to ameliorate the situation.

Yours Sincerely,

Signed:- As appended.

STATEMENT ISSUED BY TEACHERS OF SCHOOL-CHILDREN FROM THE
BOGSIDE AND CREGGAN AREAS OF DERRY.

We, the undersigned teachers, concerned for the moral, physical, psychological and educational welfare of the children under our care, address ourselves to you.

From the beginning of the present school year, the education of the children has become increasingly more difficult.

We have a duty to inculcate moral standards of justice and integrity in children, and when the institutional authorities pursue an immoral code of behaviour, viz., imprisonment without trial, torture, invasion of privacy and destruction of private property, then this task becomes impossible.

The physical welfare of children is daily threatened by the incidents which take place while they are on their way to and from school.

We feel that these are due to two factors.

The first is the ill-advised positioning and provocative aspect of military emplacements at Bligh's Lane and Creggan Road, thoroughfares which are used four times a day by the vast majority of the school-going population.

The other is military behaviour;

Troop movements seem to be timed to coincide with movements of school children;

Flagrant disregard of the Highway Code is common;

Troops are continually over-reacting to relatively minor incidents and the indiscriminate use of gas and rubber bullets against children is frequent.

There is a high degree of excitability, tension, anxiety and fear in our children. This arises from the night-time searches by the army. Friends, relatives and parents have already been interned and brutally interrogated. Homes have been wrecked and in one instance an innocent mother has been killed in circumstances not yet investigated. The continuance of these conditions ensures that the mental pressures on our children are almost unbearable, and this appears to be deliberate military policy.

It is in these conditions that we, as teachers, must strive to fulfil our task of education. Against the background as outlined above, it is surely impossible to develop the mental faculties of the children to the full, and produce in them an acceptable social outlook; in other words, it is impossible to educate our future citizens.

The military policy, as presently pursued, is frustrating our work as teachers.

We demand immediate alternative action to produce a solution.