Reference Code: 2005/7/634
Title: Northern Ireland Office press notice of an attack on four prison officers in the Maze Prison by Republican internees on 15 October, 1974, and a subsequent riot.
Creation Date(s): 16 October, 1974
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.
MAZE PRISON

About 6.00 pm yesterday four prison officers in a Republican convicted prisoners compound at the Maze Prison were attacked by a number of inmates. Three were injured; one is detained in hospital with a suspected fracture of the skull.

The Governor of the prison took steps to have the men responsible for the attack removed from the compound. Other prisoners in the compound prevented them from leaving. While this was happening prisoners in this and other Republican convicted prisoner compounds were seen to be arming themselves with weapons made from broken beds and to be putting on masks and padding made from bedclothes.

Prison staff prepared to go into the compound to remove the prisoners responsible for attacking the prison officers but before they could do so a number of huts in Republican compounds were set on fire.

A number of prisoners broke out of their compounds and some attempted to reach the main gate but were prevented from doing so by prison staff. Other buildings were set alight including the prison hospital and kitchen. Prisoners attempted to set fire to the prison cell block where four prisoners were being held. Prison staff rescued the four men and put out the fire.

All visits and privileges have been suspended until further notice.

At the request of the Governor during the evening, security forces immediately took action to ensure that the perimeter of the prison was secure. This did not involve any contact between security forces and the prisoners and no prisoners were hurt. At one stage however it was found necessary to use CS gas and baton
rounds to prevent prisoners from creating damage to the perimeter of the camp.

The authorities had made contingency plans against a major disturbance engineered
for propaganda purposes and Army reinforcements were quickly brought in by
helicopter from various parts of the Province.

A further statement will be issued during today. An assessment of damage will be
carried out at the earliest opportunity and appropriate administrative arrangements
following the disturbances are in hand.

NOTE:

This statement was telephoned to Belfast Offices early this morning.