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Stormont Castle
10 October 1978

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Honourable Roy Mason MP, was told at a Security Review Meeting at Stormont Castle today that a total of 56 people had been charged with terrorist-type offences during the past three weeks. Six people had been charged with murder and one of these was in relation to the bomb attack on La Mon House as a result of which 12 people had been killed and 23 others injured.

Five other people faced murder charges in the same period and the Chief Constable of the RUC, Sir Kenneth Newman, told the Secretary of State that in a number of cases arrests had followed quickly after the commission of the crimes. Ten people had been charged with attempted murder, 16 with firearms and explosives offences and 24 with armed robbery and other offences.

There had been a number of significant finds of firearms, explosives material and ammunition including 11 rifles, a mortar and several cylinder bombs.

The Chief Constable said that during the review period a number of meetings and marches had taken place in various parts of the province. The most recent had been in Londonderry on Sunday last when the RUC had had to deal with a march and counter-demonstration in the city. There were no serious incidents and only two people had been detained in hospital as a result of stone-throwing incidents mainly in the Waterside area. A total of 19 people were detained during the disturbances and the names of a substantial number of others had been taken with a view to proceedings at a subsequent time.

The Secretary of State asked the Chief Constable to convey to the RUC his appreciation of the way in which they had carried out their duties with the support of the Army in relation to the marches. Although people had the right of peaceful protest organisers of such marches and demonstrations were well aware of the risk which was presented to the peace of the community as a whole and they should be aware that the RUC had the duty to ensure by whatever measures were necessary that peace and good order were maintained.