

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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p/s pa the disappeared

IRA Statement on the Disappeared 29/3/99

The statement issued by the IRA to the BBC said, in full:

"IRA statement.
"P. O'Neill.

" Eighteen months ago we established a special unit, under the command of one of our most senior officers to ascertain the whereabouts of a number of people executed and buried by Oglaigh na hEireann approximately 20 years ago.

"These burials took place prior to an Army Council directive that the body of anyone killed by Oglaigh na hEireann should be left for burial by their relatives. This issue has caused incalculable pain and distress to a number of families over a period of many years.

"Despite many complicating factors which have both hampered and protracted this investigation, including the lapse in time, changes in leadership, and the deaths of both members and former members of Oglaigh na hEireann who were involved, we can now conclude this inquiry.

"We believe we have established the whereabouts of the graves of nine people, some of whom were members of Oglaigh na hEireann who were executed for activities which put other Oglaigh na hEireann personnel at risk or jeopardised the struggle. Information regarding the location of these graves is now being processed and will hopefully result in the speedy retrieval of the bodies.

"As we have previously stated, we are not responsible for all those previously listed in the media as having gone missing over the last 30 years. We are responsible for those we have acknowledged today and their families have all been notified.

"In initiating this investigation, our intention has been to do all within our power to rectify any injustice, for which we accept full responsibility, and to alleviate the suffering of the families. We are sorry that this has taken so long to resolve and for the prolonged anguish caused to the families."

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PRESS AND INFORMATION OFFICE
MINISTER AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND LAW REFORM
AN OIFIG PHREASA AGUS EOLAIS
AN tAIRE AGUS AN ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT, COMHIONANNAIS AGUS ATHCHÓIRITHE DLÍ

Statement by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform

I welcome recent indications from Sinn Féin that there is a genuine effort being made to locate the graves of missing people. The Government fully recognises the long suffering of the families involved and their overwhelming desire that the bodies be located so that the funerals of their loved ones can finally take place. Against this background, the Government is prepared to facilitate a process in relation to the locating of the remains through introducing legislation to the effect that evidence resulting from that process could not be used in the prosecution of offences. The Government believes that this represents a necessary step to obtain the objective of the families.

I understand that the British Government is also willing to facilitate this process.

29 March, 1999.

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NORTHERN IRELAND
Information Service

29 March 1999

SECRETARY OF STATE WELCOMES EFFORTS BEING MADE TO LOCATE GRAVES OF 'THE DISAPPEARED'

In a statement, the Secretary of State said tonight: **"I welcome recent indications from Sinn Fein that there is a genuine effort being made to locate the graves of missing people. If further, early progress can be achieved, it would bode well for our discussions this week.**

"The families of such victims have endured great suffering, in some cases over long periods. If the remains of their loved ones can be located, funerals can take place, and a period of uncertainty thankfully brought to an end.

"If there is further progress, we would need to discuss the details. But if it would facilitate the process, I would be willing to consider changing the law to ensure that any evidence which emerges in locating the remains will not be used in subsequent criminal proceedings. I understand that that is the position of the Irish Government also."

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