

File

TEXT OF STATEMENT TO BE MADE AT PRESS BRIEFING AT 11.30 20 AUGUST 1971

We wish this morning to state once again in the clearest possible terms where the Security Forces stand in regard to two issues to which some publicity has been given in the past few days. I refer to allegations that the security forces are not impartial in dealing with outbreaks of violence and to allegations of rough treatment of certain individuals.

Impartiality. Firstly, the allegations about one sided action being taken in dealing with outbreaks of violence. Here it is essential that everyone must understand that the security forces have firm instructions to bring to justice all terrorists and troublemakers without regard to religious or other views.

I can assure you that no one confronting the security forces on the street is questioned about his beliefs before action is taken to end disorder.

The security forces do not attempt to adjudicate on the credibility of the various sectarian claims. Our aim is to eliminate violence irrespective of its source and we believe this is also the urgent desire of the vast majority of citizens of this country. The Security forces are thus quite neutral as between one section of the community and another, but they cannot be neutral between those who act within the law, and the law breakers such as gunmen, bomb throwers or subversives. The two main factions of the IRA have had a near monopoly of such men. It should therefore not surprise anyone that these form the great majority of those now detained.

Allegations of rough treatment. Next the allegations that security forces used undue force particularly on one day, the 9 August. A number of statements alleging wrongful handling have been made by a few of the individuals recently arrested by the security forces. Despite publicity given to these allegations it is remarkable that the GOC has received only two formal complaints and these are being investigated. The RUC have received only

I think it right that I should now reveal that the arrests carried out on the morning of August 9 occurred 24 hours in advance of the time originally planned in order to achieve a greater measure of security. The soldiers involved were under orders to act with all speed since any delay could have led to wanted men receiving warning. It is also important to remember that the arrest squads were operating in some instances in areas where they had been shot at only a few hours before. We are quite sure that there was no warning and the operation was successful. It was largely completed in 2 hours. In such circumstances there was no time for civilities but we believe that only the necessary force was used. Those arrested were given a full medical inspection, both on arrival at the "police office" and again on moving into place of detention. These medical tests are available for any investigation. I should like to say once again that the security forces cannot take action on allegations reported only in the press. The correct procedure for anyone who considers that he has a grievance

is to report directly to the RUC giving details of the alleged offence in a personal statement. Only then can complete investigations be made. Any complaints made to the Army will be handed over to the police who are responsible for the investigation.