



PRESS RELEASE

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR BRIAN FAULKNER DL MP
AT 11 15 AM ON MONDAY 9 AUGUST 1971

If Northern Ireland is to survive and prosper, two things are essential. We must sustain a continuing programme of economic and social development, and we must find the means to create a more united society here - one in which all men of goodwill, however divergent their legitimate political views, may participate to the full. These things are, and will continue to be, the aims of our policy.

Neither will be possible in a climate of terrorism and violence. The outrages to which we have been subjected now threaten our economic life and create every day deeper divisions and antagonism within our community. These, indeed, are the clear objects of those who carry them out.

Every means has been tried to make terrorists amenable to the law. Nor have such methods been without success, because a substantial number of the most prominent leaders of the IRA are now serving ordinary prison sentences. But the terrorist campaign continues at an unacceptable level, and I have had to conclude that the ordinary law cannot deal comprehensively or quickly enough with such ruthless viciousness.

I have therefore decided, after weighing all the relevant considerations, including the views of the security authorities and after consultation with Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom last Thursday to exercise where necessary the powers of detention and internment vested in me as Minister of Home Affairs.

Accordingly, a number of men have been arrested by the security forces at various places in Northern Ireland this morning. I will be making Internment Orders in respect of any of these men who constitute a serious and continuing threat to public order

and safety. This will be done only after a careful scrutiny of information furnished to me in respect of each such person, sufficient to convince me that the individual in question is a threat to the preservation of peace and the maintenance of order. Any such person will then have the right to have his case considered by an Advisory Committee, which will hear his representations and make recommendations to me.

I have taken this serious step solely for the protection of life and the security of property. At all times I have consistently emphasized that it was not a step towards which I would be moved by any political clamour. Equally, I cannot now allow the prospect of any misrepresentation to deflect me from my duty to act.

This is not action taken against any responsible and law-abiding section of the community. Nor is it in any way punitive or indiscriminate. Its benefits should be felt not least in those areas where violent men have exercised a certain sway by threat and intimidation over decent and responsible men and women.

The main target of the present operation is the Irish Republican Army which has been responsible for recent acts of terrorism, and whose victims have included Protestant and Roman Catholic alike. They are the present threat; but we will not hesitate to take strong action against any other individuals or organisations who may present such a threat in the future.

It is with understandable reluctance that one uses these exceptional powers, but the organisations concerned are those which have murdered in cold blood, created situations which have led to death or injury to people quite uninvolved in disorder, maimed numerous people including young children and put at risk the jobs and the whole future of entire communities. I ask those who will quite sincerely consider the use of internment powers as evil to answer honestly this question:- is it more of an evil than to allow the perpetrators of these outrages to remain at liberty? I cannot guarantee that the action we have now taken will bring this campaign swiftly to an end. We may yet have much to endure as a

community; but if we endure it with courage and steadiness, the utter defeat of terrorism is sure.

That is the aim we must now put before everything else, and for this reason I have also decided that the security forces must not, at this critical time, be diverted from their essential tasks. Because of this, and taking into account also the further damage which any serious public disorder, however occasioned, would do to commerce, industry and indeed the community as a whole, I have today made an Order prohibiting all processions throughout Northern Ireland, with the exception of customary Remembrance Day parades organised by ex-Servicemen's organisations, for a period of six months. Thereafter I will review the position in the light of circumstances prevailing at that time.

I am sorry that this decision will inevitably interfere with rights and traditions cherished by many people, but I must ask all concerned to accept it as truly necessary in the vital interests of the country. We are, quite simply, at war with the terrorist, and in a state of war many sacrifices have to be made, and made in a co-operative and understanding spirit.

The action we have now taken does not indicate any policy of repression. We are acting not to suppress freedom, but to allow the overwhelming mass of our people to enjoy freedom - including freedom from fear of the gunman, of the nightly explosion, of fire-raising, of kangaroo courts and all the apparatus of terrorism. The rest of us cannot truly be free while people determined to commit such outrages are at large.

In particular, I want to say a word directly to my Catholic fellow-countrymen. I do not for one moment confuse your community with the IRA or imagine that these acts of terror have been committed in your name or with your approval. I have always had great respect for the God-fearing people - albeit with political views different from my own - I have met in every part of Ulster. I respect the way in which your religious leaders, and many of your public representatives, have outspokenly condemned violence as immoral. We are now acting to remove the shadow of fear which hangs over too many of you. I appeal to you to come out and join us in building this community up again; not to restore it simply to what it was, for many of us in the past have failed each other,

but to build it on better, sounder and stronger lines. Unless you take the place in our community which awaits you, all of us will be the losers. My door is open to any of your leaders, political or religious, who want to discuss how we can now move forward.

Over the last couple of years we have taken many steps to make it clear that we want all the people of Northern Ireland to play a part in administering and developing the country. But neither changes in law nor changes in administrative structures can unite this community until we defeat - and unite to defeat - those violent men who seek to divide us. Firm action on security is not a substitute for constructive change nor is it a switch of policy; it is simply what is needed to allow the democratic process to prevail over the rule of force. For force stands in the way of all progress and the men of force, whatever their protestations, are the enemies of us all.