

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2005/151/701
Title:	Views of Northern Ireland political parties on detention
Creation Date(s):	[February] 1975
Level of description:	Item
Extent and medium:	1 page
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Access Conditions:	Open
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Views of Political Parties and Organisations on Detention for the
Gardiner Committee

The SDLP is opposed to detention and sees in the Emergency Provisions Act one of the major factors in the continuing IRA campaign. They feel that if detention were ended some of those released would revert to violence but feel that greater damage is done by continuing the existing system.

The Alliance Party see internment as a breeding ground for further and continued violence and consequently want it ended immediately. They recommend changes in normal judicial procedure in order to combat terrorism and maintain security.

The UDA urges an immediate unconditional end to internment. No alternatives to replace it are offered by them.

The Official Unionist Party, the Vanguard Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party are opposed to an immediate and unconditional end to internment. With minor differences of detail among their proposals they urge a gradual phasing out of the system and recommend the release of detainees in return for certain assurances and undertakings and the release of members whose organisations have declared cease-fires. They also want a speeding up of the various legal processes. Vanguard concurs with the SDLP in that some of those released would return to violence.

The Faulkner Unionist Party is the only party which now gives general approval to the present system of internment as such and their recommendations would not affect any essential changes in it. They do, however, recommend the speeding up of hearing and review procedures, greater efforts to rehabilitate the detainees and a more expert and "technical" handling of the system by the RUC rather than the Army. Brigadier Ronald Broadhurst and Peter McLachlan have taken an independent line on this matter and condemned internment in more fundamental terms.