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STATEMENT OF HIS EMINENCE  
CARDINAL TOMÁS Ó FIAICH

## FUNERAL OF MARTIN MALONE

(1st August 1983)

It is with a sad heart that I returned to Armagh from the West of Ireland this morning to share in the grief of another family among our parishioners who have been suddenly cast into mourning. If a priest's place is with his people at all times, then surely it should be the aim of a bishop to be available to them particularly in times of distress, sustaining them in hope and uniting them in charity. Martin Malone is the fourth young parishioner of mine to have been shot dead during the past year and a half by forces claiming to represent 'law and order'. After the death of Tony Harker and again after the shooting of Seamus Grew and Roddy Carroll I and several others called for a full investigation and the publication of the evidence. Now, more than six months later, we are still completely in the dark, although it was possible to investigate a similar shooting by a policeman in London in a few days. There are some particularly suspicious circumstances in connection with the present killing: Martin Malone was shot at point-blank range; one of his comrades was assaulted by a soldier as he tried to telephone for a doctor; the whole patrol disappeared at once; and the police did not visit the scene of the occurrence or inform the deceased relatives for several hours after his death.

A fortnight ago I strongly condemned the murder of four members of the U.D.R. in this diocese. How can one pronounce the deliberate killing of a member of this force as murder and the deliberate killing of an unarmed bystander by a member of this force as something less than murder. It was Pope John Paul II who said on his visit to this diocese four years ago: "I pray that nobody may ever call murder by any other name than murder".

A few weeks ago the Northern Catholic Bishops, in condemning the use of plastic bullets, had occasion to point out that there cannot be one law for the security forces and another for the public. This was in keeping with what our Holy Father asserted in Drogheda but is very rarely quoted compared with other passages; "The moral law, guardian of human rights, protector of the dignity of man, cannot be set aside by any person or group, or by the State itself, for any cause, not even for security or in the interest of law and order. The law of God stands in judgement over all reasons of state".

Yet despite our grief and mourning we must not allow any thought of bitterness or hatred or revenge to be uppermost in our hearts today. The follower of Christ must be untiring in his quest for justice but he must be always prepared to forgive. For he knows that he too needs the pardon of God for his sins, and that he cannot expect God to forgive himself unless he in turn is ready to forgive others.

I extend my deep and heartfelt sympathy to Patrick and Geraldine Malone, to the deceased six sisters and three brothers and to his other relatives and friends. Suaimhneas síoraí dá anam.