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Remarks made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Mr Peter Barry TD, to Fine Gael election workers in Cork on
Saturday, 9 June 1984

We were in touch with the British authorities on the morning of 6 June about the remarks of Judge Gibson in Court in Belfast the previous day. We have emphasised again, as we had repeatedly done earlier, the concern that is felt by many throughout Ireland, but particularly among the minority in Northern Ireland, about the circumstances of a series of killings by the security forces in Northern Ireland in November and December 1982. We have stated that we believe it is essential that the British authorities take action urgently to make it clear that there is no shoot-to-kill policy being followed in any unit of the security forces operating in Northern Ireland.

As regards the comments of Judge Gibson following his verdict, we have stated that these are absolutely unacceptable and give rise to widespread resentment and indeed fear. While Judge Gibson found that the defence had no case to answer it should be recalled that the Director of Public Prosecutions brought the charges in the first place. Clearly the DPP felt that the evidence was sufficient to bring charges in both this and the previous case. Such action is never taken lightly.

Far from contributing to peace and stability and respect for the judicial and security systems in Northern Ireland, the only beneficiary from the remarks made by Judge Gibson will be, as we told the British, the Provisional IRA, who will use them to attempt to justify their own violence in Northern Ireland and the incitement of young people to violence. In particular, we have pointed out to the British that the comment that the action of the RUC resulted in "bringing the three deceased men to justice, in this case to the final courts of justice", is entirely unacceptable and unworthy of any decent judicial authority.

We believe that it is essential that the British authorities distance themselves clearly from the implications of these

comments by Judge Gibson. It is deeply regrettable that these statements and other comments attributed to Judge Gibson could be read as in effect justifying a shoot-to-kill policy. We are glad that Secretary of State Prior confirmed that there has not been and is not such a policy. We believe, however, in the circumstances that the British authorities should take every necessary measure to reassure the population that there are no grounds for believing that such a policy is being followed.