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The Government met today to review the additional security measures which could be taken in response to the horrific atrocity perpetrated in Omagh last Saturday.

They wish at the outset to convey, once again, heartfelt sympathy to the surviving victims, to the relatives and friends of all the victims, both in Ireland, North and South and in Spain and to their communities. They recognise that nothing they say or do can ease the pain or the suffering of victims, relatives and friends but their thoughts are with them at this terrible time. They wish to underline that the Garda Síochána are giving every possible assistance and co-operation in efforts to bring those responsible for this evil act to justice.

The Government believe that the Omagh bombing was intended as a direct attack on the Good Friday Agreement and on the principle of democracy itself. They believe also that the fact that those responsible are prepared to defy the 85% of the people of Ireland, North and South, who voted in favour of the Agreement in May underlines just how out of touch with reality - and correspondingly dangerous - they are. The Government are determined to do everything in their power, working closely with the British Government, to defeat and suppress this murderous conspiracy against the people of Ireland.

In political terms, the best answer to the perpetrators of the appalling deed in Omagh is the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement in all its aspects. In co-operation with the British Government and all the parties involved, we will be pressing forward with this work in the weeks and months ahead.

But a response is necessary also at the security level. Having reviewed all the available options, the Government have decided that *[Material to be inserted on security measures decided]*

The Government believe that these measures, together with the very extensive measures and security co-operation already in place, will be effective in ensuring that those who organised and carried out the merciless attack in Omagh will be unable to undertake any further outrages. They remain fully prepared, however, to contemplate further measures should that prove necessary.

The Government do not undertake these measures lightly. They fully recognise that there are limits to what a democratic Government can or should do in seeking to defeat terrorism. They also remain anxious to make as much progress as is possible in the circumstances towards normalisation in the security area, in line with, and as part of, the Good Friday Agreement. They believe, however, that they have a clear responsibility, with the British Government, to protect the Agreement and the people of this island, North and South, from attack by self appointed death squads whose only legitimacy stems from their own warped imaginings. The Government are determined to live up to that responsibility.