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from the office of

*Senator Edward M. Kennedy
of Massachusetts*

STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY RENEWING APPEAL
FOR AN END TO INTERNMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 9, 1972

Today, the people of Northern Ireland, caught amid the new bloodshed and destruction that have shocked the world in recent weeks, mark the unhappy first anniversary of Great Britain's cruel and repressive policy of internment.

Perhaps there is no step that can be taken now in Northern Ireland that is capable of stemming the ferocious tide of violence threatening to consume the people of Ulster, Protestant and Catholic alike. But I believe that an end to the unconscionable policy of internment must rank at the top of the list of available steps that can and should be taken if there is to be any hope at all of bringing an early and peaceful end to the killing and violence.

No nation that calls itself a democracy can justify a policy of internment for its citizens. In the case of Northern Ireland, the shame of internment has been twice compounded -- first by the evidence of torture in the internment camps, the facts of which were established beyond dispute in the recent Compton Report; and second, by the incredibly unfair manner in which internment has been applied -- "For Catholics Only" has been Britain's internment policy, and it has been overwhelmingly applied in practice.

What about the UDA? What about the Protestant gunmen? What about the Protestant assassination squads who have been so active in recent weeks? I hold no brief for the IRA, or for the violence and destruction so wantonly inflicted by members of the Catholic minority in Ulster. But surely, British justice is a farce in Northern Ireland today, when only Catholics are interned, and Protestant gunmen roam free.

Today, when passions in all the Catholic communities in Ulster are rising high against Great Britain because of the British invasion of the "no-go" areas and the British occupation of Catholic districts, and when the obvious absence of comparable steps against Protestant violence is making a mockery of Britain's claim to even-handed justice, it is long past time to confront the issue of internment.

And so on this tragic first anniversary, I renew the appeal I have made so often in the past. I urge Prime Minister Heath and Secretary Whitelaw to act now to end internment, and to restore the reputation of justice and decency and fairness for which Britain has always been renowned.