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Statement issued by An Taoiseach on behalf  
of the Government.

At a meeting this morning with the Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D., and the Minister for Justice, Mr. Gerard Collins, T.D., the Garda Commissioner, Mr. Patrick McLaughlin and other senior officers gave a detailed report on the recent outbreaks of violence, arson and intimidation and the measures that had been taken and that were proposed to deal with the situation.

The Government deplore these outbreaks, particularly the rioting in Dublin involving serious attacks on members of the Garda Síochána and widespread damage to property, and the arson attacks on the homes of innocent people in different parts of the country.

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The Government wish to emphasize their determination that the situation will be firmly dealt with and that they will discharge their fundamental duty to protect life and property. They intend that no effort should be spared to apprehend those responsible for these crimes which can bring benefit to no-one but which cause grave public disquiet and anxiety, put jobs at risk and the cost of which must be borne ultimately by the Irish taxpayer.

The Garda are confident that, despite the difficulties which the outbreaks of violence pose for them, the actions they have taken to contain and control the situation will be effective. They have reported that they were receiving the understanding and support of the overwhelming majority of the general public in their efforts.

The Government wish to point out that the Gardai on these occasions are acting on behalf of and in the best interests of the people as a whole. As a humane and dedicated Force, they did not seek confrontation but they must, however, take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that ordinary men and women can go about their daily business without intimidation and fear. In any situation where street violence arises, the action to be taken by the Garda Síochána is and must be a matter to be decided by the Garda Officer on the spot, having due regard to all the circumstances and in the interest of the welfare and safety of the general public.

The Government are aware of the widespread public concern at the fact that recent incidents included petrol-bomb attacks on members of the Force. They wish to convey again the Government's total support for the Garda Síochána in the suppression of these

crimes and to re-affirm their commitment to  
provide the Gardai with all necessary resources  
to enable them to cope with the problems and  
difficulties these incidents create for the community  
as a whole.

18th May, 1981.