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<b>Reference Code:</b>	2011/127/1052
<b>Creation Date(s):</b>	[5 May 1981]
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	1 page
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
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STATEMENT BY THE TAOISEACH

The death of Bobby Sands is yet one further tragedy in a long line of such tragedies in Northern Ireland. It must surely bring home to all concerned the need to find a solution that will bring a just and lasting peace to the area.

Since the hunger strike began, I have sought constantly by every means open to me to secure a humanitarian solution that would avoid loss of life. I deeply regret that such a solution could not have been found through a more flexible approach to the administration of the prison.

To the Sands family and to the families of all those who have suffered bereavement or injury, I extend sincere sympathy on my own behalf and on behalf of the Irish Government.

I appeal now to all sections of the Irish people that there should be no further suffering, injury or loss of life and that the sorrow and grief which exist should be expressed in a calm and dignified manner.