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Statement by the Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Mr. Peter Barry, T.D.
on the case of the Birmingham Six

I have been informed by the British Home Secretary, Mr. Douglas Hurd MP, that he has decided to refer the case of the Birmingham Six to the Court of Appeal.

In October 1985, I requested the Home Secretary to reopen the case following the emergence of new evidence which substantiated doubts which I held about the convictions and appeared to me to justify a decision to refer the case to the Court of Appeal. I have been pressing the Home Secretary to take this course of action since that time. In this period also, an All-Party Delegation made two important visits to Britain during which they had an opportunity to make representations direct to the Home Secretary and his officials.

I, therefore, welcome the Home Secretary's decision and believe it will be welcomed by all parties in the Dail. I am pleased that the Birmingham Six have at last received this new opportunity to establish their innocence in the courts and I am hopeful that the Court of Appeal will reach a favourable decision in their case.

I understand the Home Secretary considers there are insufficient grounds to warrant a similar decision in the Maguire case or the case of the Guildford Four. I have made the Home Secretary aware of the widespread public concern felt here about these cases. I will continue to urge the Home Secretary to refer these cases to the Court of Appeal and to bring to his attention any developments which seem to me to support this course of action.

20/1/87.