

DRUMCREE

Lines to take

- The scenes witnessed in Portadown and many other parts of Northern Ireland in July were inexcusable and went beyond the legitimate rights of people to express their beliefs and opinions. Finding a solution to the parades issue has proved to be extremely complex, not least because the views held by both sides are strongly ingrained and go beyond what may seem, to some, to be a superficial problem into areas such as cultural heritage and historical standpoints.
- All operational decisions regarding the policing of the parade at Drumcree, as with all parades in Northern Ireland, were for the Chief Constable of the RUC to make, and in assessing the situation during the stand-off it was his view that the risk to life was so great he had no option but to allow the parade to proceed along Garvaghy Road.
- This decision, as with the earlier decision to re-route the parade, was taken in circumstances where, despite strenuous efforts being made, no accommodation could be reached between the residents of Garvaghy Road and the Orange Order. The Government supported him in those decisions.
- The violence reinforces the Government's firm belief in the urgent need for dialogue through the multi-party talks in an attempt to move away from the recent dreadful events to a peaceful settlement acceptable to all in Northern Ireland.