

## NORTHERN IRELAND

My reaction to this outrage is the reaction of decent people everywhere - one of horror at the act of murder, and anger at what looks like a deliberate attempt to place obstacles in the road of peace.

Our first thoughts however are with the families and colleagues of the officers killed. We are reminded again of the terrible risks involved in policing Northern Ireland.

This appalling terrorist attack has been claimed by the Provisional IRA. Meanwhile Sinn Fein talks peace and has suggested a new ceasefire may be possible. Both governments had resumed contact with them at official level on this basis. Their cynicism and hypocrisy are sickening. Their actions defy normal understanding. It is difficult to interpret this latest attack as anything but a signal that Sinn Fein and the IRA are not interested in peace and democracy, and prefer violence. There is obviously no question of a further meeting with Sinn Fein in these circumstances.

Nevertheless we will not be deflected from our efforts to achieve peace and a lasting settlement. The terrorists can achieve nothing through their violence but alienation and despair. They deserve nothing but condemnation.

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