
Garvaghy Road Residents' Coalition

c/o 3 Ashgrove Road
Portadown BT62 1EU,
Co. Armagh.
13th October 1997

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Nationalist community in Portadown, we wish to register our complete dismay at the manner in which the issue of the July Orange march along the Garvaghy Road was handled by the Government this year.

It is our view that the decision to force that march through this area was morally wrong and totally unjustified given the availability of an alternative route for the marchers.

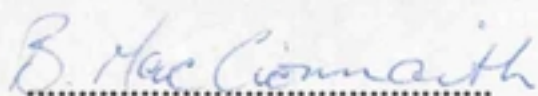
Furthermore, the conduct of those involved in the joint RUC/British Army operation mounted in this area from 3.00pm onwards on July 6th, led to widescale brutality and unprovoked assaults upon men, women and children living in this area, and to the imposition of illegal restrictions being placed upon members of this community to such an extent that the majority of people were unable to go about their legitimate business. Those restrictions meant that the vast majority of parishioners were prevented from attending their normal Sunday Masses at 8.00am, 10.00am and 12.00 noon in St. John the Baptist Church.

We wish to express this community's lack of confidence in the Secretary of State and in the Parades Commission. It is the consensus of opinion within this community that the Secretary of State and the Parades Commission dealt with the Drumcree/Garvaghy Road march issue in an underhand and deceitful fashion.

We call upon you, as Prime Minister, to institute an independent investigation into all the events and circumstances surrounding this year's march along the Garvaghy Road on July 6th 1997. We believe that such an investigative body should be comprised of international judicial and human rights figures.

We look forward to your early response.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr. Breandán Mac Cionnaith