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DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE TAOISEACH

**BLOODY SUNDAY**

Your predecessor sent me on 24 June last year an assessment of material which his Government had compiled on the events of 30 January 1972, known as "Bloody Sunday". I am writing now to explain in more detail our response to this assessment which [ was ] announced by Mo Mowlam in the House of Commons [today].

My officials have examined in detail the assessment, the supporting material which was passed to us by the Anglo/Irish Secretariat, and the material presented to the previous Government by John Hume MP and some of the relatives of those killed. Some of the allegations opened up complex lines of inquiry which we have followed up.

The most significant of these were the allegations by a named former soldier that some of his colleagues shot and killed unarmed civilians. We have now made contact with the former soldier through an independent lawyer acting on our behalf.

It appears to us that the material encompasses allegations of criminal offences such as to make a criminal investigation appropriate. Accordingly we concluded that we had to pass our findings to the police. We have handed over all the material that we received to the RUC. We will ensure that all appropriate action is taken by the relevant authorities in the light of the police investigation.

In order not to prejudice the police investigation or any subsequent criminal proceedings we do not propose now to make a public statement about the results of the examination of the material nor to publish it.

Although pending the police investigation I can say no more about the allegations, I have no hesitation in echoing Mo Mowlam's words that events of the day should not have happened, and that we are sorry that they happened. I am acutely conscious of

Ltr Prime Minister.Bloody Sunday/SOF3

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the pain and suffering that the families of those killed are continuing to go through,  
and of our need to do what we can to address that.

PRIME MINISTER

From: John Holmes

Date: 15 January 1996

cc: Jonathan Powell  
Alastair Campbell  
Philip Barton

CONVERSATION WITH ABERNETHY

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