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Press Statement

23rd May, 1973.

We, the undersigned priests, are first cousins of the late Michael Leonard, Pettigo, Co. Donegal (who was shot dead by an R.U.C. patrol on Thursday last) (17th May). We share in the grief of his immediate family at his tragic and unnecessary death. We feel that the grief of the family has been compounded many times by the circumstances of his death and by the many rumours and talsehoods that are circulating.

As priests, we feel that the taking of human life is the most serious event that can occur in any community. We feel that it is vitally necessary to assuage the grief of the family that the inquest be held as soon as possible and that a full statement be made of all the circumstances leading up to Michael's death. We believe that this is also a matter of grave public concern.

As priests, we stress that this statement is made with a Christian spirit of understanding and compassion. We abhor and reject any feelings of hostility that may arise because of this tragic event. We are asking for the truth and nothing more.

Fr. Sean McGrath.

Fr. Joe McVeigh.