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## BROADCASTING AND TERRORISM

**TO BE CHECKED  
AGAINST DELIVERY**

STATEMENT BY THE HOME SECRETARY.

19 OCTOBER 1988

cc PSN

RSS

Mr. Gallagher

Mr. O'Donnell

Mr. Ryan (tel.)

Mr. O'Brien.

PSE

Mr. Nally

Mr. Brogan

CO/Pres

19/10

With permission, Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement about access to the broadcast media by certain organisations in Northern Ireland.

For some time broadcast coverage of events in Northern Ireland has included the occasional appearance of representatives of paramilitary organisations and their political wings, who have used these opportunities as an attempt to justify their criminal activities. Such appearances have caused widespread offence to viewers and listeners throughout the United Kingdom, particularly in the aftermath of a terrorist outrage.

The terrorists themselves draw support and sustenance from having access to radio and television, and from addressing their views more directly to the population at large than is possible through the press. The Government has decided that the time has now come to deny this easy platform to those who use it to propagate terrorism. Accordingly, I have today issued to the Chairmen of the BBC and the IBA a Notice, under

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the Licence and Agreement and under the Broadcasting Act respectively, requiring them to refrain from broadcasting direct statements by representatives of organisations proscribed in Northern Ireland and Great Britain and by representatives of Sinn Fein, Republican Sinn Fein and the Ulster Defence Association. The Notices will also prohibit the broadcasting of statements by any person which support or invite support for these organisations. The restrictions will not apply to the broadcast of proceedings in Parliament, and in order not to impair the obligation on the broadcasters to provide an impartial coverage of elections the Notices will have a more limited effect during election periods. Copies of the Notices have today been deposited in the Library, and further copies are available from the Vote Office so that honourable Members will be able to study their detailed effect.

These restrictions follow closely the lines of similar provisions which have been operating in the Republic of Ireland for some years past. Representatives of these organisations are prevented from appearing on Irish television, but because we have had no equivalent restrictions in the United Kingdom they can nevertheless be seen on BBC and ITV services in Northern Ireland, where their appearances cause the gravest offence, and in Great Britain. The Government's decision today means that both in the United Kingdom and in the Irish Republic such appearances will be prevented.

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Broadcasters have a dangerous and unenviable task in reporting events in Northern Ireland. This step is no criticism of them. What concerns us is the use made of broadcasting facilities by supporters of terrorism. This is not a restriction on reporting. It is a restriction on direct appearances by those who use or support violence.

I believe that this step will be understood and welcomed by most people throughout the United Kingdom. It is a serious and important matter on which the House will wish to express its view. For that reason, we shall be putting in hand discussions through the usual channels so that a full debate on the matter can take place at an early date.