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Reference Code: 2019/101/2267

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OIFIG AN AIRE GNOTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ATHA CLIATH 2
DUBLIN 2

26 July, 1989

Ms. Anna Fowler
Chairperson
Drumcree Faith and Justice Group
232 Churchill Park
Portadown
Northern Ireland

Dear Ms. Fowler,

On behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gerard Collins T.D., I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 18 July concerning Northern Ireland.

I will bring your letter to the Minister's attention at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN KIRWAN

John Kirwan
Private Secretary



DRUMCREE FAITH AND JUSTICE GROUP
232 Churchill Park,
Portadown
Northern Ireland.

July 18, 1989
Mr Gerry Collins, TD.
Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2.

Dear Mr Collins.

We have written to the Irish Government on several occasions over the past few years about Orange marches through the Garvaghy Road in Portadown. On 23 June last, in order to see if the RUC were prepared to treat the Nationalist community with the same respect as Unionists, our group attempted to march through the centre of the town. In response to the threat of violence by the Protestant Action Force the RUC rerouted the march on the grounds that it was likely to lead to a breach of the peace. Because of this the Group deliberately kept the numbers involved in the march to a nominal figure.

On the 9th and 12 July Orange parades were put through the Garvaghy Road despite the known objections of people in the Nationalist community. The march on 9 July led, not surprisingly, to a breach of the peace, but in this instance the RUC deemed the cause of this to be the local residents, not the Orangemen.

Neither of these parades is traditional. In 1987 the Orangemen were offered and refused the opportunity to walk Garvaghy Road on the Sunday before the 12th. The march on the 12th itself was introduced in 1986.

Many local people have said to us that the answer to this problem is to threaten sufficient violence against Orange marches to force the RUC to reroute them. That is not our view since we are committed both to non-violence and to building a relationship between the RUC and the local community. We believe that if these parades were rerouted, or if Nationalist parades had access to the town centre, it should be quite feasible to develop a police-community liaison committee, and we would certainly support this.

You said this week that you will be raising the Keady march at the next meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference. Will you also be raising the issue of the Portadown marches?

Can you let us know what serious efforts the Irish and British Governments intend to make to resolve this disagreement?

Finally, can you let us know in what way the British Government intend implementing a programme to improve relationships between the Nationalist community and the security forces in Portadown?

Yours sincerely,

A. Fowler.

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P. Anna Fowler,
Chairperson.



OIFIG AN AIRE GNOTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ATHA CLIATH 2
DUBLIN 2

31 July 1989

Ms Anna Fowler
Chairperson
Drumcree Faith and Justice Group
232 Churchill Park
Portadown
Co. Armagh

Dear Ms. Fowler

Thank you for your letter of 18 July 1989 concerning Orange marches through the Garvaghy Road in Portadown.

I very much regret the decision of the authorities to allow marches through the Garvaghy Road again this year. While the Government recognise that progress has been made in recent years in the more effective and impartial policing of marches in Northern Ireland, there are still areas which are a cause of concern. In particular, the Government have urged the British Government to implement the principle that marches should not go where they are very clearly unacceptable to the local community.

The recent Review of the working of the Conference attaches great importance to policies aimed at improving relations between the security forces and the community in Northern Ireland and ensuring that the security forces are clearly perceived to discharge their duties evenhandedly, acting at all times within the law, with equal respect for the unionist and nationalist traditions.

The Review acknowledges that further work remains to be done in this area and provides that progress will be reviewed on a regular basis at the Conference. I can assure you that I attach major priority to seeking further progress in relations between the security forces and the community and, with this objective in mind, will be raising the question of the Garvaghy Road in the course of discussions of this year's marches at the next meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference.

Yours sincerely

GERARD COLLINS T.D.

Gerard Collins T.D.
Minister for Foreign Affairs