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## A STATEMENT BY THE CHIEF CONSTABLE MR HUGH ANNESLEY

“ I am deeply concerned, as are my colleagues at every level within the Force, at allegations of collusion with loyalist terrorist groups and the disappearance of photographs from a Police Station:

It was this concern that led me to appoint a senior police officer from England to carry out an in-depth investigation. I have already made it clear to Deputy Chief Constable Stevens that his enquiry will be facilitated in every way possible. This stance has also been endorsed in frank statements by the Superintendents' Association and the Police Federation. In this particular connection I appeal to anyone who has any information to offer in respect of 'leaks' or associated matters to report it now, either to my office or that of Mr Stevens.

While some commentators have been quick to apportion blame in a most generalised manner, this aspect must await the result of Mr Stevens' enquiry. But let this be clear, the RUC will not tolerate wrong-doing should it be uncovered within its own ranks or flinch from tackling it in any other branch of the Security Forces or elsewhere in society. Criminality will be dealt with without fear or favour, as has been evidenced by the bringing to justice of a substantial number of both loyalist and republican terrorists over many years.

I took no pleasure in releasing the recent information regarding missing photographic montages. But a clear facet of honest policing is the disclosure of information, which the public have a right to know, irrespective of whether it is complimentary or embarrassing. Otherwise there is no public debate and no commitment to policing by consent.

Much has been said and written about the concerns of the Nationalist community. Let me say again that the RUC is totally committed to providing an impartial, even-handed service and to protecting and defending that community with the same dedication given to other sections of our society.

But I would be failing in my duty if I did not allude here to a serious and ongoing feature of life in this Province. Over the past 18 months and not least during the summer of 1989 the RUC, supported in full measure by the Army, including the UDR, has faced a potential level of terrorist violence and public disorder unprecedented in recent years.

As the result of hundreds of security forces' operations, complemented by a significant level of public support for our stance against violence, many lives were saved and massive disorder averted.

I was pleased at that stage to express my thanks and admiration to the RUC and to the Army for their unstinting efforts on behalf of all the people of Northern Ireland. I unhesitatingly reiterate those sentiments now.

In the midst of what has happened in recent days, terrorism has not gone away. The threat to life and limb from republican and loyalist terrorist organisations remains high. The RUC and the Army will continue to do their duty on behalf of all the people of Northern Ireland. In return I ask all sections of the community to give us their full support. ”

HUGH ANNESLEY  
21 September 1989