

Irish Northern Aid Committee
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New York (April 16) Paul Doris, national chairperson of the Irish Northern Aid Committee, has expressed grave alarm over the recent beatings at the weekend of several men detained after British Army searches in the south Armagh area of Ireland.

Doris said seven men were detained for questioning by British forces and that one man suffered a broken hand and another broken ribs.

"These men were picked up in a British Army swoop of the area. Hundreds of British troops were searching homes and farm land and when they were taken to the British garrison in Crossmaglen they were beaten by soldiers.

"Irish nationalists are familiar with this British Army tactic. Too many Irish have been jailed in the past 28 years after being forced to confess to actions they were not associated with by over zealous thugs in British uniforms. If this happened in America it would be a national scandal. In Ireland it's almost a daily occurrence," said Doris.

Several hundred troops descended into the Cullyhanna area of south Armagh on Thursday in a major search operation. Homes were taken over and British soldiers prevented residents from returning over night.

"One of those arrested was Míceál Caraher. He was wounded in an unprovoked British Army attack against he and his brother Fergal in 1990. Fergal was a Sinn Féin worker and was killed in the attack. This sort of jack-booted performance by the British Army is dangerous and potentially deadly. But I'm not surprised it's happening now as John Major is facing an uphill battle in the May 1 British general election," said Doris.

Doris also pointed out that there was extensive British forces activity in County Tyrone over the weekend, with British troops taking over farm land to set up nearly two dozen heavily fortified checkpoints.

Just before Easter, Gareth Doris, a cousin of the INA chairperson, was the victim of an unprovoked attack by British undercover soldiers in Tyrone. The Coalisland teen was shot in the stomach as he was returning from confession. He was transferred Wednesday to Long Kesh Prison where he is recovering. He is held in a regular cell and not the prison's hospital wing and it is believed his wound may be infected. He has been charged with attempted murder although he was unarmed at the time of the attack.

The New York-based Irish Northern Aid Committee, founded in 1971, is a non-profit, humanitarian organization which raises funds for the families of Irish political prisoners in British, Irish and American jails.

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