



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

14 September 1988

Dear Mrs. Perfed:

I was deeply moved by your letter and have read it several times. As a wife and mother myself, I can all too well understand the appalling sadness which you still feel at the tragic death of your son Michael at the hands of the Provisional IRA. Through my own visits to Northern Ireland, I am very well aware of the courage shown by the men and women of the armed forces who carry out their duties for the benefit of the whole community, knowing that they are constantly at risk from terrorist violence. We all owe them an unmeasurable debt of gratitude. They and their colleagues in the Royal Ulster Constabulary have paid a heavy price for their dedication and commitment to the law abiding people of Northern Ireland. But the loss they have suffered will not be in vain.

You mentioned a number of matters which you felt might help the security situation in the Province. I understand your support for the introduction of selective internment and it is an option we keep under constant review. It is something which might prove effective in the short term but experience has shown that in the long term it could make the task of the security forces even more difficult. The Government's policy is to deal with terrorism through the normal criminal law and any major step away from this would tend to increase support for the terrorists in Northern Ireland. This was borne out very dramatically in the early

1970s when, following the introduction of detention without trial, violence increased significantly and the level of support for the terrorists reached an all time high. However, the option is available and if the Government, in consultation with our security advisers, considered that it would be effective it would most certainly be introduced.

With regard to integrated education, we are very keen to encourage this where there is a demand for it. There can, of course, be no question of forcing this on parents who do not want it, but we shall do all we can to encourage it and there are now six such schools in Northern Ireland which have achieved maintained status.

I agree entirely with your comments regarding collections for terrorist organisations such as the IRA. It is already an offence under the Prevention of Terrorism Act to collect money for a terrorist organisation and those responsible are brought before the courts where sufficient evidence is available.

The Government remains committed to the defeat of terrorism and as you know I have recently asked for a wide ranging security review to be carried out. This is well underway. You will appreciate that I cannot go into details at this stage but I can assure you that everything possible will be done to try and restore peace and stability to Northern Ireland.

I should like to offer you my deepest sympathy for the loss you have suffered. I know that my words will not ease the burden of your grief, but I hope they will help to reassure you of our determination not to give in to terrorism and to continue the work so bravely carried out by Michael and his colleagues.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher