

STATEMENT FROM:



# BILLY ARMSTRONG MLA

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## **Armstrong condemns weekend violence in Mid-Ulster**

Mid Ulster MLA Billy Armstrong has condemned the spate of republican activity which took place in Mid-Ulster over the weekend and has called on the Secretary of State to provide resources to enable an increase in the number of Police officers stationed permanently in the area to deal with this threat.

The UUP man said;

“On late Thursday night a car was hijacked at the marina car-park in Ballyronan and in a separate incident shortly afterwards, six men were arrested on the outskirts of Stewartstown by Police investigating so-called dissident republican activity, although I understand that these individuals have since been released. On Saturday morning the Police and Army had to carry out a controlled explosion on a viable explosive device close to Magherafelt Police Station.

As I have previously stated, it is obvious that a group of dissident republicans are operating in the Mid-Ulster area. Whilst I am confident that the local Police are doing all they can to disrupt the activities of these people, It is absolutely vital that the Police are given the resources they need and that local people assist the Police by providing them with the information to enable them to make arrests and bring charges.

Whatever these groups chose to call themselves, whether Real IRA or Continuity IRA, the simple fact remains that they are just terrorists and are the enemies of us all. These are the sort of people who bombed Omagh, murdering anyone who happened to be in the vicinity, regardless of age or religious affiliation. More recently they have murdered the two soldiers at Massarrene barracks in Antrim and Constable Stephen Carroll in Craigavon.

All men of violence are simply fascists who have absolutely nothing of any value to offer anyone in Northern Ireland in terms of the peaceful future and jobs, housing etc which the entire community wants to see. These people must be stopped and the Police can only succeed if they are properly resourced and have the help of the community. I would therefore call on the Secretary of State to ensure that the local Police Commanders have sufficient resources to deal with this threat.”

ENDS