



DIRECT RULE was imposed by the British Government after a long chain of events and a serious breakdown of trust and law and order

WHAT IS DIRECT RULE? Direct rule is when the Northern Ireland Parliament at Stormont was suspended and rule was imposed centrally from the Westminster Parliament in London

It was imposed on Northern Ireland by the British Prime Minister Edward Heath in 1972 in the hope of stabilising the situation and forming the chance to create a new and agreed solution to governing Northern Ireland



On top of this failure Faulkner was now calling for the RUC to be rearmed and the B Specials to be reintroduced, both of which would have enflamed nationalists

## BACKGROUND

**SUMMER OF 69**  
British troops arrive

**1969 PIRA FORMED**  
with aim of achieving a United Ireland by force

**July 1970 FALLS ROAD CURFEW**  
British troops seal off and search nationalist areas using force in a move which lost a great deal of nationalist hearts and minds

**1971 INTERNMENT**  
Introduced by Faulkner but spectacularly backfires as few paramilitaries and no loyalists are lifted and nationalist anger deepens. IRA support and violent campaign gathers pace

**January 1972 BLOODY SUNDAY**  
14 shot dead in Derry by British paratroopers  
Deep nationalist anger and Unionist fear.

**March 1972 DIRECT RULE IMPOSED**  
Stormont suspended and NI ruled from Westminster  
Deep unionist anger and republican hope

## WHY WAS DIRECT RULE IMPOSED?

**1) THE SECURITY SITUATION**  
N.Ireland was becoming increasingly violent. The RUC and army were under immense pressure.  
A) INTERNMENT had proved a huge failure and had only inflamed nationalist anger and resentment.  
B) Bloody Sunday had boosted IRA support and finds massively

**2) POLITICAL ACCEPTANCE**  
Heath wanted to achieve a solution that both sides could agree with. He knew that nationalists had NEVER supported the Stormont Parliament and were now even more hostile to it. This was not going to change with it still in existence  
Northern Ireland needed political breathing space to create the space for a compromise  
He thought this would only be a TEMPORARY SOLUTION

**3) CHANGE NEEDED**  
Heath also knew that the big changes in Northern Ireland like anti discrimination legislation would not be passed in Stormont but could be in Westminster

## REACTIONS TO DIRECT RULE

**UNIONISTS WERE DEEPLY ANGRY!**  
They regarded Stormont as 'their' Parliament and therefore their protection from a United Ireland  
1) A **huge STRIKE** was called which shut down Northern Ireland for **TWO DAYS**  
2) Over **100,000** Unionists protested outside Stormont  
3) the more extreme Loyalist movements like **Ulster Vanguard** and the UDA were now very well supported.

**NATIONALISTS WERE MOSTLY VERY HAPPY!**  
They felt that at last the British government seemed to be taking things seriously. Some preferred to be ruled directly by Westminster than by Unionists  
1) The **PROVISIONAL IRA** had achieved one of its key aims- to end Unionist rule at Stormont.. could they achieve more and win the United Ireland they wished through violence? They stepped up their campaign  
2) The Irish government and the moderate SDLP welcomed the chance to find a new accepted solution  
3) N Ireland was now ruled by the British government could they now achieve the civil rights they ...

- Heath made 5 demands of the unionist government
- 1 Security was to be pas...
  - 2 A British Secretary of State would control northern Ireland
  - 3 internment would end
  - 4 political talks would decide the future
  - 5 a referendum would be held on a United Ireland

Faulkners unionist government was outraged and resigned (as Heath wanted)  
Direct rule was then imposed in its place

William whitelaw was the first Northern Ireland Secretary of State