

The Royal Norwegian Government  
INFORMATION OFFICE



KINGSTON HOUSE,  
PRINCES GATE,  
LONDON, S.W.7.  
KENSINGTON 9441

**PRESS RELEASE (NORWAY)**

WNW/BR

STATSMINISTEREN  
Arkiv

(No permission is required for reprinting this material)

Not to be published or  
broadcast before 18.30  
B.S.T. on Tuesday,  
26th December.

Speech broadcast from London to Norway  
on Tuesday, 26th December, at 18.30  
B.S.T. by the

NORWEGIAN PRIME MINISTER, HR. JOHAN NYGAARDSVOLD

.....

...Germans' Calculated Crime in Finnmark must be Punished..

...Advantages of Military Action from the West..

..A New Government and Early Elections After Liberation...

...

Norwegian men and women:

I had thought that this Christmas I would not have had to send you a greeting from London, but the war has been protracted longer than most of us expected, a year ago at any rate. You at home are faced with another winter of war, with less food and with more hardships than ever before. I know what that means.

But there is one thing that can give us joy this Christmas. For the first time in more than four years, the Norwegian flag has been hoisted again on Norwegian soil. And now at least a small part of our people have had their liberty returned. Thanks to our Russian Allies, the Germans have been chased out of East Finnmark and they are still retreating.

German Devastation of North Norway

Joy at the liberation of the first piece of Norwegian territory is, however, mixed with sorrow and anguish at the tragedy which has struck the people in the North. We have been told how the Germans are behaving while in flight, how they are killing, looting and laying waste.

That is not war. It is a carefully calculated and systemati-  
cally executed crime, and, like all crimes, it must be punished. I believe the whole Norwegian people will agree that the Germans should pay dearly for what they are doing today to our country and particularly to our compatriots in the North. Each German officer, each soldier, must be brought to account for what he has done, and the penalty must be so severe that it is compatible with the crimes which have been

committed.

I have a special greeting for those men and women who are living in a free part of our country this Christmas. The freedom which you have regained has truly been dearly purchased. By generations of faithful toil, life in this niggardly part of our land had been made tolerable. In the most difficult conditions, with nature inhospitable, amid wild and stormy seas and through the long winter nights, the people of Finnmark by diligence and labour veritably made their contribution to building up the land. All this, the so-called German "Army of Defence" has sought to destroy by all the means in its power. But one thing I know the barbarians have failed to destroy, and that is the will to live - that indomitable, optimistic courage of the people of North Norway. They have survived hard times before, and we know they will survive their present trials also.

But outside help is essential. The people who are left up there are short of houses, clothes, food, medicines, and the equipment necessary to start the work of rebuilding. The most critical shortage now in winter is probably housing. As far as we know, the Germans also burnt all building material before they left.

#### Relief Measures

Devastated as everything is up there in Finnmark, the provision of immediate and effective help is naturally bound up with difficulties. Even though our Ministry of Supply is well prepared as regards supplies for liberated but distressed areas of our country, the distances from Great Britain are great and it is not always easy to secure suitable ships at comparatively short notice. In times like these, no ships are laid up or have to wait long for orders. But, I repeat, neither the Germans nor the Norwegian traitors will succeed in extinguishing the love which the people of Finnmark and of the whole of North Norway cherish for their own patch of the soil of their fatherland.

The difficulties connected with what the Government has to do as regards supplies for maintaining life and facilitating rebuilding only exist in order to be surmounted. The Government will leave nothing untried, and it intends to allow no obstacle to stand in the way of securing relief for those parts of our country which the Germans have razed.

Our first aim is to relieve the immediate need. The first consignments of food, clothing and medicines have already reached their destination and have been distributed around the districts to the extent that has been possible. And more will come.

We have also endeavoured to secure materials for temporary housing for those people who have been most severely hit, and work on this matter is proceeding. All means will be used. The people will be given all possible assistance. There will be enough work, for example in clearing up and in erecting temporary accommodation. We will give the local authorities all the authority they require in regard to labour, wages and distribution of the supplies which are procured. We are well aware that these tasks are difficult, in view of the way the Germans have behaved. But Norway shall be built up again. What Nazism, occupation and dictatorship have laid waste, the people will build up again in complete freedom and by democratic administration.

What the present generation fails to complete, the next generation will continue to work at.

It is also our intention, even while we are still over here, but in co-operation with the local authorities, to endeavour as soon as possible to establish the basis for a permanent improvement of living conditions in Finnmark. The consummation of such measures will rest with those who are to govern Norway after the war. When such extensive material misfortunes have struck this part of the country, we must all realise that it must be the duty of the whole Norwegian people to ensure that the planning and carrying out of the reconstruction of the ravaged areas be performed upon such a broad foundation that our northernmost province may really be guaranteed a happy and prosperous future.

#### German Withdrawal Plans

With regard to the continued German withdrawal to the south, we know that they want to transfer some of their divisions from the north to other fronts where they are so sorely needed. We also know that they still intend to effect the compulsory evacuation of the people and to burn and destroy wherever they can.

I will repeat what I said on the radio when the liberation of North Norway began: Every German soldier who escapes to the south will help to lengthen the war both for the Norwegian people and for other peoples.

And I will add: Every bridge and quay they blow up, every farm and hamlet they lay waste, will be an enduring burden for our people in the future. To do all that can be done to sink German transports and hamper the compulsory evacuation and devastation will therefore obviously be to Norway's advantage. I draw attention here to the order recently given by the Commander-in-Chief, Crown Prince Olav, in regard to this. Every individual effort will count.

There are certainly many who ask: Why is there no attack from the West to cut off the Germans' long line of retreat and halt the devastation in the north?

To this I can only reply that we ourselves are not strong enough to make such an attack with Norwegian forces alone. We must have help from our Allies, and it is for the Allied military leaders to decide where the forces they have can best be employed in order to inflict decisive defeat on the Germans. We have, however, considered it our duty to impress upon these leaders as strongly as possible the humanitarian considerations and military advantages which we believe would be associated with such an Allied military operation to cut the Germans' retreat southwards through Norway.

If and when this will occur, and how many months will still have to pass before the whole of Norway is free, cannot be said, and I do not know what the plans of the military leaders are. But I

appreciate that many at home may be impatient. We are too. Four and a half years is a long time to wait.

But we must understand, nevertheless, that all forces are now being used to put an end to the war in Europe as quickly as possible. It is the decisive final phase of the war which we have now entered. The Norwegian people have made a contribution which has earned respect, and we have made our sacrifices, both at home and abroad, not least in the fight for the freedom of the seas and to secure the lines of supply to the fronts. Already, several thousand Norwegian seamen, airmen, naval personnel and other soldiers have given their lives alongside those who have fallen on the Home Front. They have been dear losses.

#### Norwegians Must Play Their Part

But in the time to come, when the fighting will become still more intense, and may affect the whole of our people more directly than before, we must be prepared to accept all the sacrifices which the situation will demand.

We know that the Germans have laid their plans to devastate the West of Norway too when they realise that the fight has been lost. We thus have twice as much reason to do all we can to hamper the German war-effort and to see that the Germans are not allowed to withdraw their forces to the south unmolested. The means of weakening the German war effort are clear. No one must help them in any way, either by work or services. Those who cannot escape, must do as little as possible and sabotage wherever they can. This silent sabotage can be very effective when the whole people participate in it, and there is the advantage that it is not very easy to discover its source. Then we have the active sabotage, the attacks against German installations and against factories which are working for the Germans. This is carried out by organised groups belonging to the Norwegian Forces of the Interior and is part of the planned offensive which is now being directed against the Germans on all fronts. I should like to say that the courage and enterprise displayed by these groups at home in their attacks against the Germans' most exposed points deserve the highest recognition. We know that when the time comes for greater operations, we have the men.

The important thing is not to expose oneself too much and to avoid German provocations. The misdeeds of the Germans certainly cause the blood of many Norwegians to boil. But retribution must strike the Germans where it hurts most without our strength being squandered. When the time comes to launch a large-scale attack against the Germans, against their most important communications through South Norway, against railways and roads, bridges and ferries, every single man will be needed.

.. ..

In a few days, we will enter the New Year. We all hope and believe that it will bring us peace. And this time I do not think we will

be disappointed in our expectations. With raised heads the Norwegian people will once more be able to undertake constructive work for their country's good. The hardships of these years have been hard to bear, and many sad memories will remain. But in all this time, freedom has represented our promised land, and I think I can dare to prophesy that the people of Norway will embark upon the solution of the many problems which will arise with more energy than ever before. I personally hope that the feeling of solidarity which we have seen grow in our people more and more strongly during the occupation will continue to be our best source of strength when we have to restore the country's economic and political life and the people's rights. Especially in the first transitional period, until we are once again complete masters in our own house, I cannot sufficiently emphasise the importance of unity in all large questions, and may those who wish to break away gather a poor harvest. If freedom is to reign again in Norway, it is up to each one of us to show himself worthy of freedom.

#### Constitutional Problems Following Liberation

On this occasion, I should like to say something about the Norwegian Government's position and about certain of the constitutional questions which have to be solved.

In my Christmas talk as long as two years ago, I announced that the Government now in power would apply for leave to resign immediately the King and Government had returned to Oslo. There were several reasons that prompted me to say that. First and foremost I thought it right that the Government which has now been Norway's lawful Government in Great Britain for almost five years, should be succeeded by a new Government immediately after returning home. I considered that the mandate given us by a unanimous Storting at Elverum in April 1940 to prosecute the war, to preserve the Kingdom's interests, and to maintain Norway's sovereignty, would then have been accomplished.

Furthermore, there are also many practical questions which present themselves, for example in regard to matters which come under the more essentially technical departments, and where it would be an advantage that people who have been at home during the whole of this time should immediately take charge.

#### A New Government

The Government therefore maintains that it will seek leave to resign at the first Cabinet Meeting which can be held at Oslo Palace when the liberation of the country has been completed.

I neither can nor wish to say anything about how the new government should be formed, what its composition should be, or what its first mandate should be. The present Government realises that various difficulties may be attached to the formation of a new government without the collaboration of the Storting. We hear from home that opinion is divided as to whether the old Storting should be summoned or not, owing to what happened during the so-called Storting negotiations in 1940, and owing to the more serious sins of certain individuals. This need not be an insuperable obstacle. There are deputy-members who can be summoned if it is considered that certain members of the Storting have behaved so unpatriotically that their

presence in the Storting is no longer desirable.

In any case, the old Storting's task would be to give the new Government the necessary authority and perhaps also to appoint committees to investigate various matters in connection with the outbreak of war and with what has happened since the Government received authority at Elverum, and to make recommendations in this connection to the new Storting. But these are questions in the discussion of which the Government has not wished to participate, and in regard to which it has not wished to adopt any conclusive attitude. In our view, decisions ought to wait until, after the return home, it has been possible to confer thoroughly with representatives of the various organs of the Home Front.

#### Early Elections

Another important question is that of elections. It is the Government's definite assumption that both parliamentary and municipal elections must be held just as soon as it is technically possible. It is my personal belief that it should here be possible to shorten somewhat the normal delays, apart from the time allowed for appeals against the electoral register, which now may possibly be of greater use than previously. It would be a mockery, yes a crime against all those who have sacrificed their lives for the liberation of their country, if Nazis or collaborators or other nationally unworthy individuals were to have the chance to take part in a democratic election. On the other hand, all those who have been compelled to move inside the country, and also our compatriots in German prisons, must have a chance to take part. And we have a large number of sailors at sea who naturally must have complete opportunity to vote. Perhaps new technical devices can help to hasten the election procedure, whilst the rapid trial of traitors may clarify the situation.

All parties ought to be interested in getting democratic elections implemented in the shortest possible time, so in this field I cannot foresee any other difficulties except the unavoidable technical ones. The Government will play its part in ensuring that all problems connected with the arrangement of elections as soon as possible after the liberation are worked out in advance and made ready for application.

In this connection I should also like to say that I look forward with eagerness to the restoration of a free Norwegian Press after the liberation - a Press which, impartially and also, I hope, tolerantly, will be able to debate the all important questions of the time and serve as that good guide which a democratic society of today cannot dispense with. The sooner the free exchange of opinion is restored, in local as well as national questions, the sooner will we be able to agree about what tasks must be solved first, in what manner and on what basis.

I will say in conclusion that, even if at present we are experiencing dark days of intensified terror, greater sacrifices, and the most difficult conceivable conditions, we shall seek strength and will for further effort, believing in the Norway which we will build when victory has been won, and which will be a good Norway. If we endure and stand together, both our present and our future tasks will be easier to solve.