

cc. Mr Ingham
Mr Sands.

PRIME MINISTER

PA - CF file

Sands

MS
23/4

Sands' Offences

Sands was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment for possessing firearms and ammunition with intent to endanger life. Together with a couple of accomplices, he was caught coming out of a warehouse which they had set on fire with incendiary bombs.

Remission?

Sands has served 4 years of his sentence. If he led a blameless life while in prison and earned full remission, he would serve a total of 7 years. But he has been on the protest ever since he started his sentence and has therefore lost all the remission he might have earned so far. Even if were to end his protest tomorrow, there is no reason to suppose that all his lost remission would be restored. This means that he will be bound to serve more than 7 years of his sentence.

Political Status

The Northern Ireland Office are very anxious that you should make it clear, if the opportunity arises, that although we are ready to respond to reasonable criticism of prison conditions in Northern Ireland (even though they are regarded as amongst the best in the world), there is absolutely no question of the Government changing its position on political status for prisoners convicted of terrorist offences as a result of Sands' election.

Sands' Pay as an MP

MPs are paid from the day they are elected.

JWH.

13 April 1981