

cf to note



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a N10.

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

3 September 1981

Dear Miss McCloskey,

Thank you for your letter of 20 August about your brother.

I do entirely understand how worried you and the rest of the family must be about him. I want you to know that despite what is said and written by some people about my attitude to the hunger strike, I very much regret that young men have been prepared to throw away their lives for an objective which - as I have said on many occasions - no responsible Government anywhere could grant, since it could only aid and abet those who advocate and use violence to attain political ends.

I note that you say that you, your family, relatives and friends are all anxious that your brother should not sacrifice his life as ten other prisoners have now done. I can only urge you all to impress on him that the five demands of the prisoners amount to a prison regime which no Government could concede, for the reason I have given. It may be that if this is put to him by people he knows and trusts, he will decide to stop his fast and so save his life.

I hope you will see that it is this course which would be courageous and right - not for your brother to continue, and so produce another pointless death with all the consequent anguish to family and friends as well as further tension in the community and the risk of more deaths and injuries to people not directly involved.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Miss Sharon McCloskey.

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

William Rickett Esq
10 Downing Street
SW1

1 September 1981

Dear Willie

... I attach for the Prime Minister's consideration a draft reply to Miss Sharon McCloskey (whose letter you sent me with yours of 24 August). Her brother is on day 30 of his hunger strike.

Yours Sincerely
Mike Hopkins

M W HOPKINS

Pl. byre for J.M.

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE.....

To	Enclosures	Copies to be sent to
<p>Miss Sharon McCloskey</p> <p>CLOSED UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000</p> <p>(Full Postal Address)</p>		<p>(Full Address, if Necessary)</p>

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY THE PRIME MINISTER
(Name of Signatory)

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CLOSED UNDER THE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT 2000

1/9/81

Dear Prime Minister,

I hope that you will receive this letter personally as I write to you in despair and desperation.

I am the widowed mother of Liam McCloskey who, today, completes thirty days on hunger strike in the prison hospital of Long Kesh.

I would like to meet you and believe that such a meeting would perhaps give you a better understanding of my position.

If you will grant me an

interview I would like to be accompanied by Mrs B. Lynch, mother of dead hunger striker Kevin Lynch, also from Dungiven and by Mrs. M. Hinchey a close friend who has helped me a lot throughout the years of my son's imprisonment.

We want no publicity whatsoever either before or after this meeting, if you decide to see us.

We can travel to London on any day and at any time you may suggest.

I sincerely hope that you will meet us.

Yours faithfully,
Philomena McEloskey