

Ireland

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UNCLASSIFIED
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Mint*

TO IMMEDIATE CERTAIN MISSIONS
TELEGRAM NUMBER GUIDANCE 4 OF 12 JANUARY 1981
NORTHERN IRELAND: PAULINE MCLAUGHLIN

1. THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, MR HUMPHREY ATKINS, ON 10 JANUARY AUTHORISED THE RELEASE ON LICENCE ON MEDICAL GROUNDS OF MISS PAULINE MCLAUGHLIN FROM ARMAGH PRISON. LINE TO TAKE

2. IF ASKED WHY SHE HAS NOW BEEN RELEASED YOU SHOULD SAY THAT SHE IS SERIOUSLY ILL AND NEEDS TREATMENT AND MEDICAL FACILITIES WHICH CANNOT BE PROVIDED IN A PRISON HOSPITAL. THE BALANCE OF THE CONCURRENT FIXED TERMS OF IMPRISONMENT BEING SERVED BY MCLAUGHLIN HAVE BEEN REMITTED BY MEANS OF THE ROYAL PREROGATIVE. BACKGROUND

3. MCLAUGHLIN WAS CONVICTED IN FEBRUARY 1978 OF THE MURDER OF A SOLDIER IN LONDONDERRY IN OCTOBER 1974 WHEN SHE WAS 17 YEARS OLD. SHE WAS SENTENCED TO BE DETAINED DURING THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PLEASURE UNDER SECTION 73 OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1968. SHE WAS ALSO CONVICTED OF ATTEMPTED MURDER AND EXPLOSIVES OFFENCES AND SENTENCED TO CONCURRENT TERMS OF IMPRISONMENT TOTTALLING 16 YEARS.

*Paragraph 4 deleted and closed under
FOI Exemption.*

*Wayland
4 March 2014*

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Ireland



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

L.S. [Signature]

9 January 1981

Prime Minister

(2)

Dear Michael,

mb To note final sentence.

PAULINE McLAUGHLIN

[Signature] 9/1

You will remember that I wrote to you on 27 November about the case of Miss Pauline McLaughlin, (and you replied on 28 November). As I have indicated to you on the telephone today, my Secretary of State has now decided in the light of recent medical advice, that it would be right to release Miss McLaughlin as soon as possible, probably later today.

Paragraph deleted and closed under FO1 Exemption.

Wayland

4 March 2014

It is the view of the doctors that she will die if she remains in prison. If she is transferred to an outside hospital, although her life may well be saved, they do not foresee her being restored to a condition in which her return to prison will be medically defensible. She is unlikely to make a quick return to normal health even in the most favourable circumstances.

In the light of this very clear and conclusive medical advice, my Secretary of State feels that it would be wrong to delay

/Miss McLaughlin's release

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Miss McLaughlin's release any longer - particularly in view of the acute embarrassment it would bring to HMG were she to die in prison, something which is now an immediate possibility.

He therefore proposes to remit the balance of the fixed sentence to which she is subject by the exercise of the Royal Prerogative, (advance notice being given to the Palace), and to release her on Licence from her sentence of detention during pleasure. It will be a condition of her Licence that she should go to a Health Service hospital for medical treatment and should remain of good behaviour - in particular should not engage in any activity connected with proscribed organisations. The Licence will also specify that she must not leave Northern Ireland without the prior permission of the Secretary of State.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office).

Yours sincerely
Mike Hopkins

M W HOPKINS

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- 9 JAN 1981

