

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2011/127/1056
Creation Date(s):	9 July 1981
Extent and medium:	1 page
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Access Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

1. There have been accusations that HMG acted in bad faith in its dealings with the ICJP. There is no substance in these accusations and HMG greatly regret that they have been made. HMG have been deeply concerned to see the hunger strike brought to a lasting end. They welcomed the Commission's wish to help and gave them every facility they could. They admire the Commission's determination and dedication to their task. They regard the Commission's efforts as having been extremely helpful and having substantially clarified areas of difficulty.

2. Against that background HMG particularly regret that the Commission appears to have concluded that they were deliberately misled and are concerned to ensure that the Irish Government should not also have this impression.

3. The problems appear to have arisen because the Commission believed that when we accepted the obligation further to clarify our position to the prisoners we had at the same time accepted the method and timing which the Commission had suggested. We had not. They also have misunderstood the significance of what we said to them about clothes and work. That such misunderstandings should have occurred is perhaps not surprising given that there was a series of discussions each lasting several hours. The details of these misunderstandings are of secondary importance. HMG's concern is to assure the Irish authorities that they have not acted in bad faith and that they continue to be deeply concerned to see the hunger strike ended. Despite the setback over McDonnell's death they do not regard the hunger strike as insoluble in the context of prison reform if the prisoners are prepared to accept the reality of a prison regime as such. HMG will be redoubling their efforts to bring it to an end. They are grateful to the Taoiseach for the great efforts which they know he has made and hope that he too will continue with them.

9 July, 1981.