

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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FAX

TO : JAMES MCINTYRE< HQ FROM BILL NOLAN<BELFAST

re. INGRAM PRESS STATEMENT ON MAZE SECURITY, 29/12/97.

1. Attached is copy of above statement just received. Following this am's top level security meeting, the statement lists the new security arrangements for the Maze.

2. I understand Ingram categorically ruled out resignations by anyone whether at Ministerial or official level when asked at a press briefing outside the Maze.

3. I understand that Christy Cummins, who was injured in the Glengannon Hotel attack, is not expected to live. He has a brother who was/is a 'lifer'. As you know, Seamus Dillon who was killed in the attack was also a 'lifer'. There is much speculation in media circles here at the moment about the exact nature of the attack, therefore, in view of the connections of the two principal victims.

4. I understand the Wright funeral will take place tomorrow at Seago(?), a parish in Portadown and not, therefore, as rumoured earlier, at Drumcree Parish Church. About 5000 are expected to take part in the funeral service acc. to media sources.

5. You will know from news reports that three INLA prisoners appeared in court today at Lisburn magistrates court in connection with the Wright killing. They were: Christopher McWilliams (35), John Glennon (32) and John Kennaway (35). They were charged with murder and possession of two fire arms, a Derringer pistol and a PA63 handgun. All three were remanded and will appear again at the Maze prison on 14 January. When charged, McWilliams made a statement as follows :

> *Billy Wright was executed for one reason and one reason only. For directing and waging a campaign of terror against the Nationalist people from his prison cell.*

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NORTHERN IRELAND
Information Service

29 December 1997

STATEMENT BY MR ADAM INGRAM MP, MINISTER OF STATE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY AND PRISONS:

The Secretary of State and I met senior officials of the Prison Service this morning about the measures to be taken following the murder of Billy Wright in HMP Maze on Saturday 27 December. The Chief Constable was also in attendance. This afternoon I visited the Maze Prison to be briefed at first hand about the events over the weekend and what immediate steps the Governor intends to take to improve security at the prison.

As a first step INLA prisoners have been transferred to facilitate detailed forensic examination of the scene of the murder. They are locked down in accordance with prison regulations and are being interviewed by the RUC in connection with the incident.

In addition, the Governor has brought forward a programme of regular block searches which was due to begin in the New Year. This is one of a number of changes which the new management team under Mr Mogg are in the process of introducing.

This team has only been in place for a few weeks and has my full support in its difficult and challenging task.

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The Secretary of State and I have also decided to extend the remit of the existing independent enquiry which is reviewing procedures at the Maze following the escape of Liam Averill to include this incident.

We expect to have its report on both incidents very shortly.

Further to this and in view of the wide-spread public concern, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, General Sir David Ramsbotham GCB CBE, has been asked to undertake a full inspection of the prison.

This will be a detailed inspection covering all areas.

In the 8 months since this Government has had responsibility for prisons in Northern Ireland there have been a number of serious incidents in the prisons here.

The Secretary of State and I have not taken these lightly.

On the contrary; the fact that there is a new management team at the Maze demonstrates our resolve.

And the recommendations of the inquiry following the discovery of a tunnel in March, before we took office, have been followed up and are being implemented.

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We will be equally vigorous in pursuing the recommendations of the current inquiry. The fact that we have also decided to involve Sir David Ramsbotham in conducting a full examination of the prison also demonstrates our determination that all reasonable measures are taken.

There can never be any guarantee of complete security in a prison and especially a prison of this nature.

However I hope I have said enough to indicate my determination to do everything possible to prevent a repetition of such events.

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