

ALLEGATIONS OF BRUTALITY AFTER MAZE ESCAPE

LINE TO TAKE

The Government is naturally concerned about the allegations being made that prisoners have been mistreated in the aftermath of the Maze escape. As has already been stated, none of the recaptured escapers required to be detained in the prison hospital overnight on 25/26 September.

The allegations which have been made, most of them from outside and not by prisoners themselves, are being investigated, and when the investigation has been completed such action as may be appropriate will be taken. Meanwhile all the normal avenues are open to any inmate who wishes to make a complaint, and any inmate who wishes to seek legal advice in relation to any specified grievance will be allowed reasonable facilities to do so.

It must be pointed out, however, that there are difficulties about carrying out effective investigations into generalised allegations that prisoners have been beaten up or assaulted by staff, with no particulars being given and without specific complaints having been made to the prison authorities or through other normal channels. Allegations of this kind serve only to exacerbate tensions and to do further harm to normal relationships in the prisons.

BACKGROUND

A number of allegations have been made, notably by Father Faul and Sinn Fein, that prisoners who took part in the escape or were occupants of H7 at the time of the escape were beaten by prison officers. In particular it has been alleged that a number of prisoners were bitten by prison dogs. An Phoblacht carried a full page story on the subject. It is therefore possible that these allegations will be put to the Secretary of State in the USA.

The various allegations made are currently being investigated despite the fact that the prisoners allegedly involved have not made any formal complaint. We do however know that a large number of prisoners are making formal applications to see their solicitors and it may be that complaints will be made in this way. When our investigations are complete it will be for consideration what, if any, further action is required.

PA on
Escape file ✓