

**US Presidential Elections**  
Full coverage of the lead-up to Obama's inauguration

**Ireland**

**World**

**Cost-conscious cooking**  
What's the story with money-saving cookbooks? asks Conor Pope

**achievable in most businesses, writes Frank Dillon**

**amous musical families, but their new CD sees them putting their own stamp on the tradition**

• Other Stories »

- Email to a friend 
- Email to Author 
- Print 
- RSS 
- Text Size:  

Monday, January 19, 2009

# Minister denies approach over McKeivitt

CONOR LALLY, Crime Correspondent

MINISTER FOR Justice Dermot Ahern has denied ever making representations to former minister for justice Michael McDowell on behalf of Real IRA leader Michael McKeivitt.

It has emerged that Mr Ahern received correspondence from McKeivitt's wife, Bernadette Sands McKeivitt, in 2004 complaining about her husband's treatment at the time in Portlaoise Prison.

A report in yesterday's *Irish Daily Star on Sunday* newspaper reproduced copies of e-mails from the family that Mr Ahern forwarded to Mr McDowell. The e-mails were obtained by the newspaper under the Freedom of Information Act.


However, a spokesman for Mr Ahern said the Minister had never made representations on behalf of McKeivitt. The e-mails were simply sent to Mr McDowell for his comments on the matters raised.

The spokesman said Mr Ahern never asked Mr McDowell to follow any course of action in relation to McKeivitt's situation. He said no representations of any kind were ever made.

*The Irish Times* understands the McKeivitt family, who live in Mr Ahern's Louth constituency, contacted a number of other deputies and that these also forwarded the e-mails to Mr McDowell.

McKeivitt is still in prison where he is serving a 20-year sentence following his conviction for directing terrorism. He is one of a number of men facing a civil action from the family of those killed in the Real IRA bombing of Omagh in 1998.

McKeivitt's wife wrote to Mr Ahern to highlight the conditions he was being kept in. She said because he was involved in a protest at the jail his visiting rights had been withdrawn and she could not bring her children to see him or could not contact him by phone.

 This article appears in the print edition of the Irish Times

ADVERTISEMENT

**Car Insurance from €280\*** 

**Quick quote** 

\* Female, 29, full licence, 6 years ncb, 1.6L, comp, based in Dublin  
Insurers' terms & conditions apply.

**irishtimes.com/insurance**  
We've got you covered

Latest » 

- 13:38 Financial shares suffer huge losses in Dublin
- 13:37 Man sentenced to life for Sara Neligan murder
- 13:33 Ahern defends handling of McKeivitt complaint
- 13:29 Third of motorists claim better behaviour - survey
- 13:25 Ahern launches new measures to tackle crime
- 13:24 Fairyhouse meeting rescheduled for Friday
- 13:14 Israel continues Gaza troop pullout
- 13:11 Met Éireann warns of sleet and snow across country

Popular Stories 

### Most Read

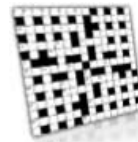
- 1 Cabinet to decide on cut in EUR 20bn public sector pay bill
- 2 Arsenal adapting to new route to goal
- 3 Six Dublin restaurants on leaked Michelin list
- 4 Stars joined by vast crowds to welcome Obama to Washington
- 5 Warning that house prices may fall by 80%

### Your Vote »

Do you think strikes would be justified if public pay cuts are imposed?  Yes  No »

Results

### Crossword Club »



Today's Interactive Irish Times Crosaire and Simplex crosswords, plus 10 years of crossword archive.

ADVERTISEMENT

### Sudoku »



Download and print the daily Irish Times sudoku grid

ADVERTISEMENT

CLASSIFIED

## Homes



5 Ballygearda, Hugginstown, Co Kilkenny Price: €315,000

Bedrooms: 4 See More »

Select your categories

Next »



Vast improvement on past models in the form of Hyundai's i20 supermini

Find »

I am a

Looking for a

Located

Only with photos:

Next »

© 2009 irishtimes.com