



# **RELEASE** **Josephine Hayden,** **Republican political** **prisoner**

REPUBLICAN Sinn Féin calls for the immediate release from Limerick prison on humanitarian grounds of Josephine Hayden (51), the only woman political prisoner currently incarcerated in the 26 Counties. A native of Clashmore, County Waterford, she has lived in Tallaght, County Dublin for 21 years.

## **• JOSEPHINE HAYDEN**

• At 7.30am, on May 30, 1997 Josephine, a member of Cumann na mBan, suffered a heart attack in Limerick prison's "C" Block. Alone in her cell she had to get out of her bed and walk to the door to ring the alarm bell. At 8.30am she was admitted to the Intensive Care unit of Limerick Regional Hospital.

• The decision to move her back to Limerick prison seven days later on June 6 was deplorable. Her cell is on the third floor and she has to walk up and down those stairs. Her cardiologist in Limerick Regional Hospital said that climbing stairs would be very bad for her and she needed to be on the ground floor.

• Josephine is a mother of two children and has served one-third of a six-year sentence in virtual isolation as the only woman political prisoner in the 26 Counties.

• The conditions in "C" Block of Limerick jail, which was built in 1821, are primitive and have contributed to her present medical condition. She shares the wing (designed for ten prisoners) with 12 other ordinary women prisoners who have no sanitary facilities in the cells and instead have to 'slop out'. The wing was actually closed down for 17 years before being re-opened several years ago due to pressure for space. The women all eat and sleep, do their laundry and engage in recreation in this small area.

• The Governor of Limerick prison, Pat Laffan, has admitted (*Radio Limerick*, February 5, 1997 and *Irish Times*, February 7, 1997) that the conditions for women prisoners in the jail are the "worst we have".

• Unlike the ordinary women prisoners who are serving short sentences for minor offences, Josephine Hayden is serving six years for political offences and will have to endure these inhuman conditions for the foreseeable future.

• Josephine has been denied visits with her children in Dublin, a facility which is available on a monthly basis to ordinary prisoners who hail from Dublin.

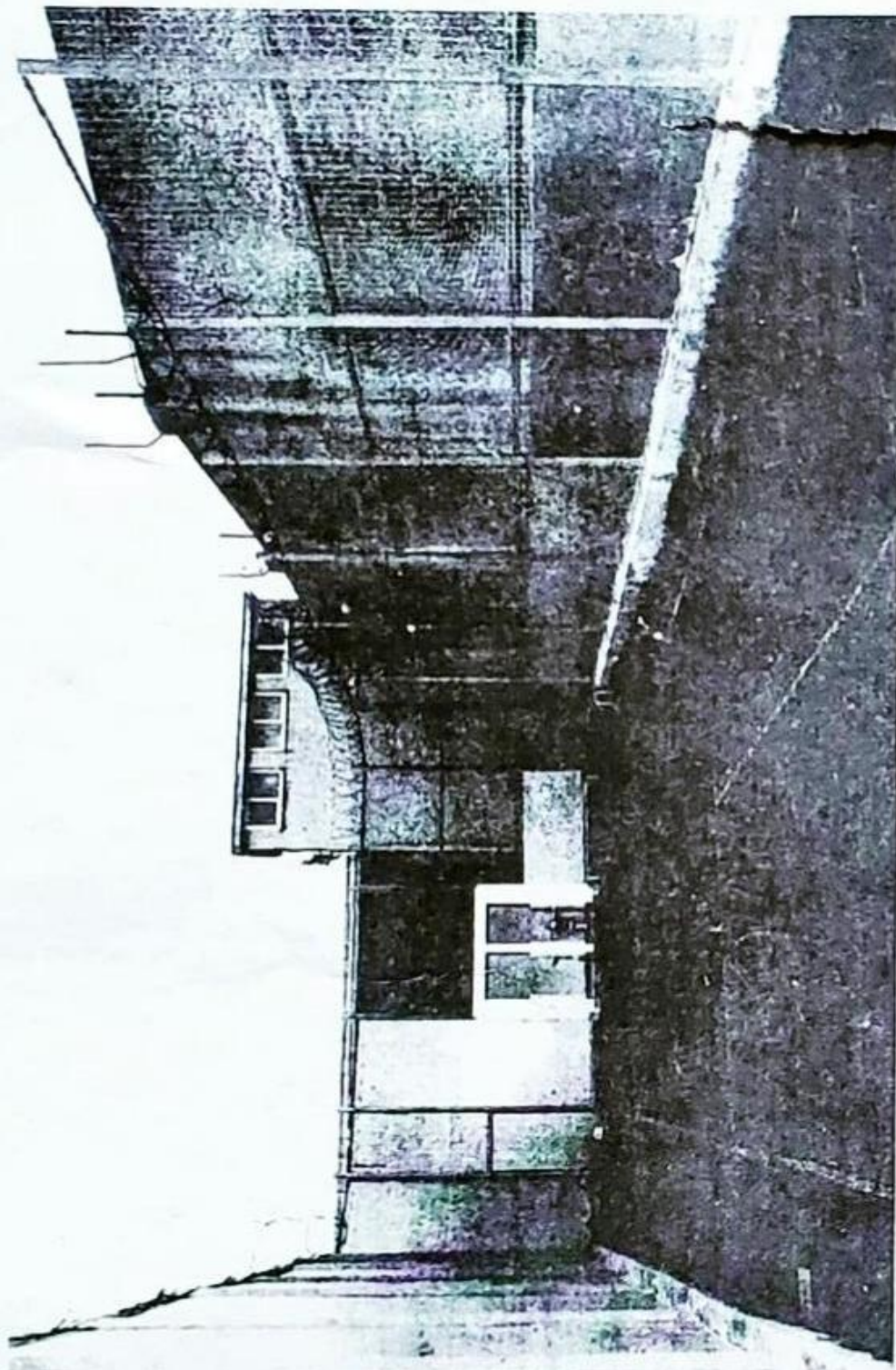
• The women's exercise yard with its 12-foot high steel walls was described in the *Irish Times* (February 7, 1997) as a "cage" (see photograph on back of this leaflet).

Republican Sinn Féin calls for the release of Josephine Hayden on humanitarian grounds. In the meantime she should be allowed a period of convalescence in hospital. Instead she has been rushed back to prison ahead of her complete recovery.

**We call on all concerned individuals and organisations to seek the release of Josephine Hayden and the closure of "C" Wing of Limerick prison.**

*Show your support by writing to: Josephine Hayden, Republican Prisoner  
Limerick Prison, Mulgrave Street, Limerick, Ireland.*

# ZOO-LIKE CAGE USED FOR WOMEN PRISONERS' EXERCISE



• The women's recreation yard in Limerick prison with 12ft-high steel walls, accurately described as a "cage".

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