

National H-Block/Armagh Committee

PRESS STATEMENT

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Tel: 747200

16 Eanáir 1981

BERNADETTE & MICHAEL McALISKEY

The National H-Block/Armagh Committee is shocked to learn of the attempted assassination of Bernadette McAliskey and her husband, Michael. We express our total abhorrence at this latest shooting which is clearly part of a concerted campaign of murder against H-Block activists and leaders. To date, several leading members of the campaign have been murdered, including two members of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee, Miriam Daly and Noel Little. Three other leading members of the campaign, John Turnley, Ronald Bunting and Tony Valenti, have also been murdered. Little or no attempt has been made by the British authorities to apprehend their killers.

This peaceful and legal campaign for the rights of political prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh has been the victim of slander, intimidation and physical elimination from the British establishment and its supporters. While the H-Block/Armagh Committee has used only the methods of peaceful and legal pressure, its opponents have not.

Bernadette is the latest victim of the assassins, obviously because she is seen to embody the determination and success of the campaign. She is P.R.O. of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee and, as such, has travelled all over Ireland and Europe holding press conferences and speaking at public meetings. The mass support for the prisoners all over this country is due in no small measure to the efforts of Bernadette in urging the setting up of local H-Block/Armagh groups in every county in Ireland.

The British government has been forced to concede to the prisoners and is being forced to implement the agreement drawn up at the conclusion of the hunger strike. The mobilisation of the majority support of the Irish people guaranteed this victory.

We call for a public investigation into this and other attacks on the H-Block/Armagh campaign. The Irish government should demand that the British put a check on their violent supporters. If the Irish government does not act in this case, it will be exposed as having complete disregard for the rights of the minority in the Six Counties.

While expressing our sorrow at this attempt to kill Bernadette and her husband, we are equally determined, as she and Michael are, to press this campaign to a successful conclusion. Our sympathy goes out to her family, neighbours and friends.

Fr. Piaras O Duill
Chairman

Christina Carney
Secretary

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