



Owen Paterson MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
11 Millbank
London
SW1P 4PN

May 19 2011

Dear Secretary of State,

We write to express our deep concern at the revocation of Marion Price's licence. We note that her solicitor described this as "unlawful as it rode a coach and horses through the presumption of innocence."

At Derry Magistrates Court Judge Barney Mc Elholm ruled that Ms Price could benefit from bail under certain conditions. In doing so he clearly indicated that no presumption of her guilt should be presumed until the matter had proceeded to trial. However, the revocation of Ms. Price's licence indicates a completely contrary presumption.

The fact that the views of the Court could be usurped in such an arbitrary manner is deeply disturbing. It is a retrograde step and is reminiscent of the worst days of the conflict when the government showed scant regard for fundamental human rights standards.

It is absolutely essential that the authorities, to quote a recent Irish News editorial, maintain the 'highest possible judicial standards.' (18.4.11) Any allegations of wrongdoing should be dealt with through the normal legal process where evidence is gathered and presented to a court where it can be challenged and tested.

In addition the unbelievable decision to hold Marion Price in an all-male jail is likely to inflame an already regrettable situation. It is simply not



Pat Finucane Centre Ltd. Company Reg. No. NI069874.
Unit B8, Rath Mor Centre, Bligh's Lane Derry, Ireland BT48 0LZ. T: (028) 7126 8846
67 Upper English Street, Armagh BT61 7LA. T: (028) 37515191
info@patfinucanecentre.org www.patfinucanecentre.org
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acceptable that proper facilities for women are not available and it may well be the case that this decision may be subject to legal challenge. Did the Northern Ireland Prison Service make the decision to hold Ms Price at HMP Maghaberry?

Those who would sacrifice fundamental human rights standards on the altar of 'counter-terrorism' inflict untold damage on public confidence and ultimately on the peace process.

We urge you reverse this decision and leave presumptions of guilt or innocence to the courts and the judiciary.

Yours,

Paul O'Connor

Project Manager

cc

Kevin Winters and Co
The Prisoner Ombudsman
The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
The Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin