

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2008/79/3115
Creation Date(s):	27 November 1978
Extent and medium:	1 page
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Access Conditions:	Open
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Monie, ~~23A~~; 11/2/1, 25/4/78



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NIO/11/14

Stormont Castle, Belfast
27 November 1978

The following statement was issued by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Roy Mason MP, after the death of Mr Albert Miles, the Deputy Governor of HM Prison Maze:-

I must express my deepest regret at the cold-blooded murder of a dedicated and humane prison official. This act must surely put an end to the charade by the Provisional IRA of their concern for the condition of prisoners.

The failure of their efforts earlier in the day to attract public support for an attempt to create public disorder has been followed by a calculated act of brutality for propaganda purposes which must attract universal condemnation.

Mr Miles, as one of the principal administrators of the Maze Prison, sought to mitigate as far as was humanly possible the effects of a campaign by the IRA designed to reduce conditions within the prison to degradation and squalor.

His concern was to sustain the health of prisoners and to maintain their living conditions at the highest possible level of cleanliness despite the efforts of the IRA to prevent this.

Prison officers have acted with responsibility and dignity in the face of a callous and inhuman campaign. They must continue to do so.

The hypocrisy of the Provisional IRA has been clearly and unequivocally exposed.

Prisoners and relatives of prisoners must now realise how callously they are being used.

NOTE:- This statement was 'phoned to Belfast offices last night.