



10 DOWNING STREET

13 April 1981

THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Cardinal O'Flaich.

You wrote to me on 3 April expressing your concern about the health of Miss Dolours Price, who is in Armagh Prison.

It is true that in recent weeks this prisoner's health has been giving increasing cause for concern. However, she has been receiving the closest possible medical attention; she has been seen by two consultant psychiatrists, and twice during the last few days by a consultant physician. I am informed that early next week she is likely to be transferred to a health service hospital as a precaution so that the level of medical surveillance can be improved still further.

The various points which you make on Miss Price's behalf have been carefully and sympathetically considered, but I am afraid that the Secretary of State remains of the view that he would not be justified, on present information, in directing her release from the life sentence and in remitting the balance of the fixed sentence of twenty years by the use of the Royal Prerogative. You may be assured, however, that both the Secretary of State and the Minister of State directly responsible for prison matters, Mr. Alison, are taking a personal interest in the case and that they both see up-to-date medical reports from time to time.

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I do entirely understand the anxiety which Miss Price's condition must be causing to her family. In this connection I should perhaps mention that approval has been given for a consultant nominated by the solicitor acting for the family to examine her for the purpose of providing them with a report on her condition.

I am sorry that I have to send you a reply which I know you will find disappointing, but as I have said Miss Price's condition will continue to be very closely watched.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher

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His Eminence Cardinal Tomas O Fiaich