



SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
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LONDON  
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David Ervine Esq  
Progressive Unionist Party

29 August 1997

Dear David,

When we spoke this afternoon, you asked me to write about two key issues of concern to loyalists.

First, let me assure you that the Government remains fundamentally committed to the principle of consent in all its aspects, as set out both in United Kingdom law in section 1 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act and in the Downing Street Declaration.

This means that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom will not change without the consent of a majority of its people. Moreover, we are committed to putting any agreed outcome to the negotiations to the people of Northern Ireland for approval in a referendum.

Second, you asked about the implications of the loyalist ceasefire for prisoners. I can give you an assurance that, at its next meeting in October, the Life Sentence Review Board will take account of the fact of each of the ceasefires, their quality and their enduring nature in arriving at any recommendations for release.





I know that Paul Murphy hopes to see you in Castle Buildings next week to continue to discuss how best to take the process forward.

*Marjorie Mowlam*

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